

NOW

EDITORIAL.

The Destructive Urge.

D. S. SAVAGE.

E. M. Forster and the Dilemma of Liberalism.

JULIAN SYMONS.

Writing and Society.

LOUIS ADEANE.

Psycho-analysis and Government.

HERBERT READ.

Henri Rousseau.

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Two Fragments.

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The Poetry of American Negro Folksong.

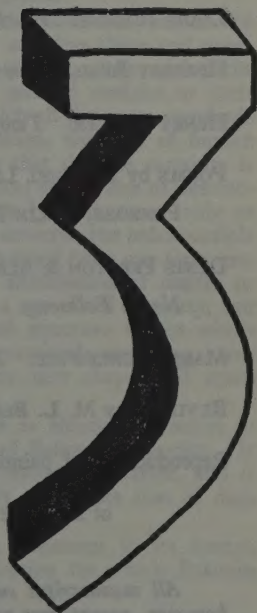
MARJA KUNCEWICZ

The Home.

POEMS by Emanuel Litvinoff, E. E. Cummings,
Valentine Penrose, Colin Robinson and
George Woodcock

Reproductions of paintings by

Henri Rousseau, Maxwell Armfield,
Valentine Penrose.



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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL. <i>The Destructive Urge.</i>	I
D. S. SAVAGE. <i>E. M. Forster and the Dilemma of Liberalism</i>	4
JULIAN SYMONS. <i>Writing and Society.</i>	14
LOUIS ADEANE. <i>Psycho-analysis and Writing (Part II).</i>	21
HERBERT READ. <i>Henri Rousseau.</i>	30
HENRY MILLER. <i>Two Fragments.</i>	33
POEMS by EMANUEL LITVINOFF, E. E. CUMMINGS, VALENTINE PENROSE, COLIN ROBINSON and GEORGE WOODCOCK.	39
DENIS PRESTON & ALBERT MCCARTHY. <i>The Poetry of American Negro Folksong.</i>	43
MARJA KUNCEWICZ. <i>The Home.</i>	49
REVIEWS by M. L. BERNERI and GEORGE WOODCOCK.	58
Reproductions of paintings by Henri Rousseau and Maxwell Armfield, and of a collage by Valentine Penrose, opposite page 32.	

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Editorial

The Destructive Urge

Let us put our trust in the eternal spirit which destroys and annihilates only because it is the unsearchable and eternally creative source of all life. The urge for destruction is also a creative urge.

Michael Bakunin. *Reaction in Germany*, 1842.

To those who regard Bakunin as one of the greatest of social philosophers, these words from his first revolutionary essay epitomise in a peculiar way one of the vital aspects of his teaching. It is also by their quotation that many of his enemies have condemned both him and the social philosophy of which he was the most dynamic exponent.

That these enemies should have seen in this statement, and in the anarchism for which it speaks, only a counsel of senseless chaos and negative destruction, a glorification of murder and conflict, shows either the limitation of their understanding of social and natural realities or their deliberate desire to misrepresent a doctrine by which all their own standards must inevitably be condemned. For a consideration, not only of human society, but also of the world of nature, reveals that the one certainty is change, and that in change is implicit the dialectical alternation of destruction and creation. Destruction and creation can be understood only as processes of change by which the substance of the universe, the indestructible whole of which no part can be annihilated, is translated from one form into another. Destruction in an absolute sense, the annihilation of matter or force, does not exist. The shape of a thing, of a vase or of a society, can be destroyed, but the shape is only the formal structure within which the component units of matter or energy are contained, and these component units remain, to be brought together into new shapes and again broken apart in the process of natural change.

If we accept, then, destruction and creation as alternating factors in the changing universe, we cannot deny the truth of Bakunin's assertion. It is a maxim which has a universal as well as a social application, and it governs the life of man individually as certainly as it does that of man in society.

In this article we are concerned with the statement in its human application, and particularly in the social application for which Bakunin intended it.

Throughout the development of their philosophy, the anarchists, alone among social theoreticians, have kept in mind this mutual interdependence of destruction and creation. They alone have been logical and bold enough to realise that if we are to create a new and good society we must destroy everything that stands in the way of our creative work. Other theorists, and all politicians without exception, have wished to retain the

outworn forms, to build their new society within the old, to use authority as a means to end the evils created by authority. The revolutions which it was everywhere hoped would bring happiness and plenty to the earth, have failed to achieve anything but tyrannies characterised by want and misery as great as those in the system they superseded. This was because those who made these revolutions considered that a different way of governing men would create freedom and mutual trust. They did not realise that only the destruction of the concept itself of government will remove the inhibiting growths that keep men from trusting each other and make from dry abstractions the living organisms of justice and liberty. We cannot carry out any process of social change without making use of the natural process of destruction and creation. A society built by any other process will be made unhealthy by the tensions that arise from the impeding of natural forces. A society based on the realities of change will grow organically and freely as any other living thing that follows the dialectical courses of nature.

We therefore believe that destruction is necessary for social development. And yet, in what may appear a paradoxical manner, we are not among the most enthusiastic practitioners in the fury of destruction which proceeds in the world today. Marked as bomb throwers and assassins, we are found among the few who protest with any vigour when our traducers drop daily thousands of bombs beside which those of the Russian terrorists were children's toys and slay millions of people whose only crime was their credulity against the few tyrants who fell by the *attentats* of men like Czolgosz and Angiolillo. This is because we have learnt that destruction is valuable only insofar as it will lead to the creation of what we seek. The processes of nature may be blind or they may be in some manner conscious—we do not pretend to know the ultimate reality of the universe—but there is no evidence that left to themselves they will achieve the ends we desire. Changes in nature do not necessarily follow human desires, and, while man cannot deny the fundamental natural processes, his freedom lies in his ability to choose, in certain circumstances, the way in which they will be used to alter his environment. Every machine is an instance of this use of a natural process to attain a chosen human end.

Thus, while we know that any change we desire in society can come only through destruction followed by creation—these being interdependent factors which cannot exist without each other—we realise also that the natural forces of destruction must be well chosen before the desired end can be reached. Knowing that the necessary change is one in the social structure, we see that our efforts must be devoted towards the destruction of those institutions and concepts which clearly hinder the growth of a free and just society. Not only must the institution of the state as it exists be destroyed, but people must be taught to think in such a way that even the abstract idea of authority can no longer influence them to seek or willingly submit to power. Our struggle is with ideas primarily, because we realise that the ultimate roots of social evils are in the minds of men.

All government is founded in opinion. Men at present live under any particular form because they conceive it their interest to do so. One part indeed of a community or empire may be held in subjection by force, but this cannot be the personal force of their despot; it must

be the force of another part of the community, who are of opinion that it is their interest to support his authority. Destroy this opinion and the fabric which is built upon it falls to the ground. It follows therefore that all men are essentially independent.

William Godwin. Political Justice.

The worst tyrants, the most unscrupulous exploiters, could never succeed for long if they did not by means of the prejudices of the mind hold their victims to agreement with certain abstractions on which their claims are based. Therefore we wish firstly to destroy the chains of thought that bind men to their enemies. Once men have learnt to think clearly, they can be left to build a new society in the ruins of the old and to ensure that their minds never again become subject.

Thus the destructive urge by which anarchism is impelled is indeed hostile to those who live by exploitation, to governors and owners, for by destroying within men the willingness to submit, it also destroys the means by which tyranny can be built over them. But for the men who wish to be free, for the subject and exploited, this urge is wholly beneficial, because it sweeps away all the rotten debris of society and the mind which prevents the creation of their freedom.

The destruction that is evident in society today, the slaughter of millions of men, women and children by the most inhuman methods, the smashing down of cities and the systematic breaking of the values of truth and culture, is one that aims certainly at creation, but at the creation of societies debased more even than before to physical subjection and mental degradation. The people die or are enslaved far from their homes, the vast technical means by which they could be given abundance are used for the senseless dissipation of social resources, and the very values of integrity, humanity and culture which were at least allowed to survive in the old society are systematically smothered in favour of cruelty and falsehood. Destruction of this kind we condemn because we realise that it cannot lead to the creation of anything good for humanity. If a better society follows the war it will come not from the material and moral destruction caused by the war itself, but from a revulsion of opinion against the achievements of war and towards the destruction of the mental concepts that precipitated and supported it.

We have no desire for the destruction that manifests itself in battlefields and bombed cities. Nor do we wish to sweep away the few good things within present society, the achievements of culture and integrity which represent the unchanging realities of beauty and truth. But we wish to see the destruction of all that stands in the way of a just society, of all the institutional forms and physical means of power, of all the ideas by which men are made willing to submit to an authority other than the sense of justice within them. We wish to see a society based, like external nature, on the processes of organic change, in which man also will be able to change and grow, each developing within him his own Tao, his own way to personal fulfilment. Then, as Bakunin prophesied,

There will be a qualitative transformation, a new, living, life-giving revelation, a new heaven and a new earth, a new and mighty world in which all our present dissonances will be resolved into an harmonious whole.

D. S. Savage

E. M. Forster and the Dilemma of Liberalism (Part I)

In view of the present popular eminence of E. M. Forster, it is a striking reflection that the five novels upon which his public reputation is based were, with one exception, composed within a period of six years during the first decade of the present century. And even the exception, *A Passage to India*, although not published until 1924, was drafted some twelve years before that date.* E. M. Forster, it appears, is an Edwardian novelist, surviving into the contemporary world as a public personality on the basis of a past creativity which has been outlasted by its early products. In spite of this, Forster's is a name which "counts"; his books are reprinted in popular cheap editions, he lectures, broadcasts, contributes to symposia on such subjects as "What I believe", sits on committees, and in other ways represents "culture" in the regions where it shades off into the realms of practical life. It is clear from all this that in some way Forster is a representative figure. When he makes public pronouncements, he voices the mind of a group and a class. As Rose Macaulay, a far from unsympathetic critic, has said of his later political writings, "... in all of them he speaks with the voice of cultured, sensitive and democratic liberalism rather than with his own peculiar note, or rather, he is speaking with that part of his voice which sings in the choir with cultured, sensitive and democratic liberalism." An examination of his mind should, therefore, lead us beyond the particular case to the general principles underlying it.

How Forster regards himself or, at all events, likes to be regarded by others, may be discovered from a reading of an essay on his work by Peter Burra which he has chosen to introduce the Everyman edition of *A Passage to India*. In this essay, asking why did Forster, who has "felt so oppressively the attractions of abstract presentation" ever adopt the novel at all, Burra replies—

It is that he has ideas which need a more distinct articulation than music or abstraction can make. He is an artist on the fringe of social reform. He is interested in causes. He has never cut himself off, as most artists sooner or later do, from the political and economic questions of the outer world. While he has never deliberately written, like Dickens, a novel with a 'purpose'—an irrelevancy to the dangers of which this art form is particularly exposed—the fact nevertheless remains that *A Passage to India* is 'a book which no student of the Indian question can disregard' . . . Probably the writing of novels has not been the most important element in his life. We are constantly given the impression that there are better things in the world to do.

And this appreciation (it is hardly criticism), winding its laudatory course,

* vide *The Writings of E. M. Forster* by Rose Macaulay.

concludes—

It is the Anonymous Prophecy that will remain with us, the transcendent beauty of the Mosque and Temple, and the athletic body of Stephen. It would be perhaps merely stupid to ask, in conclusion, for more. It is possible that the mind which saw so visionarily the significance of Stephen, and which could tell the Wilcoxes that 'nothing has been done wrong', has achieved their own wisdom; that the organism, being perfectly adjusted, is silent.

It is an odd explanation of a novelist's prolonged uncreativity, this attribution of it to some perfect inner adjustment which has rendered speech superfluous! In the present exegesis a directly contrary view will be maintained: namely, that Forster's creative sterility from 1910 to 1924, and subsequently, is the result, not of inner adjustment, but of an inner exhaustion.

Forster is a significant writer. But significant writers are of two kinds. There are those, and they are the greater ones, whose creative work proceeds from an achieved centre of being, and whose continual creativeness is the expression of the constant extension of their grasp upon and penetration into reality. And there are those others, necessarily more numerous, whose work takes its shape from the exteriorization of an inner conflict—which derives, that is to say, from a condition which is antecedent to an achieved inner integration. These latter writers work out, in the course of their art, a more or less significant personal logic, and with its conclusion, if they have not succeeded in achieving a valid inner integration which will remove them to the plane of the creators, they relapse into non-significance. Forster is a writer of the latter type, and it will be my purpose here to reveal the significant pattern which underlies his work and his silence.

The interest of that pattern lies in the fact that it takes us to the heart of the liberal dilemma, the liberal confusion, and it is the interest of Forster's novels that they reveal very clearly to the perceptive eye the inner motions which prelude an attachment to the liberal outlook.

What are the characteristics of the liberal approach to life? First of all, the liberal mind is a *medium* mind, a mind which fears extremes and which therefore is predisposed towards compromise. It inhabits a middle region of life, that of people, and therefore its characteristic expression is a social and political one; but it is incapable of moving beyond people, as they appear on the social level, to an understanding of the principles and forces which govern their lives, and this incapacity applies both to spiritual and economic realities. The compromising tendency of liberalism causes it to give mental hostages both to the realm of ideals and to the world of affairs, but it is rooted in the latter and in a crisis it is the latter which proves the stronger. Liberalism is a half-hearted creed, born out of stable and comfortable material circumstances, in which it puts its main trust, making a gesture of greater or less sincerity towards spiritual values—but nothing more than a gesture, however sincere. Those spiritual values, however, tend to become something rather less than the ultimate and therefore terrifying ones. The absolute is carefully excluded from the liberal way of life. The gesture towards the spirit is arrested, and modified into a gesture towards culture; that, in turn, resolves itself into a salute to civilisation, and in times of stress the process of deterioration will not

always stop there.

The "cultured, sensitive and democratic liberalism" which is explicitly voiced by Forster's later journalistic writings is so muddled and bewildered an affair that to examine it seriously is to risk making oneself ridiculous. In his pamphlet, *What I Believe*, (1939), we find Forster reiterating his belief in "personal relationships", although personality itself has for him no ultimate significance, and on his own admission "Psychology has split and shattered the idea of a 'Person' . Tolerance, good-temper, sympathy—"these", says Forster, "are what matter really". But it transpires that these liberal demi-semi-values exist only on the sufferance of "force", which really upholds society. As to the social question, Forster would prefer, we gather, to any social change, a perpetuation of the old order of "democratic" capitalism. But he praises "democracy" while showing no awareness of its capitalistic and therefore incipiently totalitarian sub-structure: "democracy" is considered solely from a superficial political point of view, the facade (Parliament, the Press) is naively accepted at its face-value. One is reminded of his treatment of "the Indian question" in his fifth and last novel, where the ugly realities underlying the presence of the British in India are not even glanced at, and the issues raised are handled as though they could be solved on the surface level of personal intercourse and individual behaviour.

But the liberal confusion has another and graver aspect, in which it appears not as a failure merely but as a betrayal. "I hate the idea of causes," wrote Forster in 1939, "and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country. . . . Probably," however, he adds, "one will not be asked to make such an agonising choice." Evidently Forster was not asked, for after the outbreak of war appeared *Nordic Twilight* (1940), an indictment, not very difficult to make in the circumstances, of Nazi culture and an exhortation addressed primarily, one supposes, to writers and those professing a concern with cultural values, to line up with the war-makers and join in the general totalitarian holocaust—for the sake of "culture".

That "cultured, sensitive and democratic liberalism" is not so innocent, so admirable and so pleasant as it would represent itself to be becomes apparent only upon a much closer examination than is usually accorded it. Such an examination will be implied in what follows. Liberalism, to put it plainly, rests upon a fundamental spiritual failure, a spiritual equivocation, a spiritual betrayal. It is the outcome of an absence of faith in the spiritual realities which lie at the back of the variable values to which it presents its dubious salutations. Forster in *What I Believe*, cleverly attempts to discredit faith by attributing that quality to the blind collective hysteria of the dupes of totalitarianism, thereby making it responsible for the evil and violence in the modern world. This, an age of unfaith, and consequently of greedy materialism and the worship of brute force, is characterised by Forster as "an age of faith". "A child of unbelief," as he elsewhere names himself, he begins his liberal Credo with the sentence, "I do not believe in Belief", and wittily informs us that: "My motto is: 'Lord, I disbelieve—help thou my unbelief.'" I cannot put the point of departure for the liberal betrayal more clearly than Forster has himself put it in these words.

E. M. Forster's first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, was published in 1905. In 1907 there appeared *The Longest Journey*, and this was followed, in 1908, by *A Room With a View*. Each of these novels is concerned with the dual theme of personal salvation and the conflict of good and evil. Of the three it is *The Longest Journey* which is the most emotionally intense and personal, the others being more objectively conceived novels of social comedy. It is convenient to consider the first and the third novel together—and perhaps this has even a chronological justification, for we are informed by Miss Macaulay that a draft of the first half of *A Room With a View* was made as early as 1903.

In each of these novels we have two opposed worlds or ways of life, and characters who oscillate between the two worlds. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread* the contrast and the conflict are between the world of "Sawston", that is, of smug, respectable conventionality, and that of "Italy", respecting the free play of genuine natural feeling. Sawston is personified by Mrs. Herriton, insincere, calculating, cold, and moved by snobbery and her fear of public opinion; Italy by Gino, affectionate, impulsive and natural, a primitive whose very vulgarity has charm and warmth. In the drama that is played out between these opposites, it is Philip Herriton and Caroline Abbott who suffer the conflict between the two sets of values. Italy and the dramatic events which take place there have the effect of drawing out the nobility and passion of Miss Abbott's quiet nature, and it is through her that Philip, hitherto a man who has hovered distantly on the edge of existence, is drawn into life itself and given reality.

All through the day Miss Abbott had seemed to Philip like a goddess, and more than ever did she seem so now. Many people look younger and more intimate during great emotion. But some there are who look older, and remote, and he could not think that there was little difference in years, and none in composition, between her and the man whose head was laid upon her breast. Her eyes were open, full of infinite pity and full of majesty, as if they discerned the boundaries of sorrow, and saw unimaginable tracts beyond. Such eyes he had seen in great pictures but never in a mortal. Her hands were folded round the sufferer, stroking him lightly, for even a goddess can do no more than that. And it seemed fitting, too, that she should bend her head and touch his forehead with her lips.

Philip looked away, as he sometimes looked away from the great pictures where visible forms suddenly became inadequate for the things they have shown to us. He was happy; he was assured that there was greatness in the world. There came to him an earnest desire to be good through the example of this good woman. He would try henceforth to be worthy of the things she had revealed. Quietly, without hysterical prayers or banging of drums, he underwent conversion. He was saved.

In *A Room With a View*, the antithesis is similar, but this time, although the first part of the book it set against the background of Italy, it is the radical Emersons, father and son, who represent life, truth, sincerity. The heroine, Lucy Honeychurch, is torn between the values which they represent and those of the pretentious, bookish Cecil Vyse and the insincere and intriguing Charlotte Bartlett. Lucy has a moment of intense happiness in Italy when she is kissed against a prospect of primroses by George Emerson, but, a victim of the false proprieties as expounded and embodied

by her cousin, Charlotte, she is implicated in a system of falsehoods. Persuading herself that she has been outrageously insulted by a "cad", she denies her natural feelings, and shortly after becomes engaged to Cecil Vyse. The Emersons, by a coincidence, come to live near Lucy's family in Sussex, and, after a game of tennis, when an incident occurs to remind both George and Lucy of the previous episode in Italy, George kisses her again, and afterwards pleads for her love. Lucy deliberately repulses George, denying and suppressing again her genuine feelings, and that same evening breaks off her engagement to Cecil, after which, lifeless and empty—

... She gave up trying to understand herself, and joined the vast armies of the benighted, who follow neither the heart nor the brain, and march to their destiny by catch-words. The armies are full of pleasant and pious folk. But they have yielded to the only enemy that matters—the enemy within. They have sinned against passion and truth, and vain will be their strife after virtue. As the years pass, they are censured. Their pleasantry and their piety show cracks, their wit becomes cynicism, their unselfishness hypocrisy; they feel and produce discomfort wherever they go. They have sinned against Eros and against Pallas Athene, and not by any heavenly intervention, but by the ordinary course of nature, those allied deities will be avenged.

Lucy entered this army when she pretended to George that she did not love him, and pretended to Cecil that she loved no one. The night received her, as it had received Miss Bartlett thirty years before.

In each of these novels, then, there is a spiritual conflict. In Forster's words, describing Lucy's inner struggle,

The contest lay not between love and duty. Perhaps there never is such a contest. It lay between the real and the pretended . . .

The "real", however, seems to be associated with the natural; the "pretended", with the falsities of convention which deny and frustrate the natural impulses and passions.

Italy makes no appearance in *The Longest Journey* (according to Miss Macaulay, ". . . at once the most personal and the most universal of the five novels; and obviously the most autobiographical . . ."), which is divided into three sections, the first entitled "Cambridge", the second "Sawston", and the third "Wiltshire". Once again, these localities have their counterparts in the personalities of certain of the characters. Cambridge, which clearly represents the author's somewhat naive and immature conception of the good life, has its counterpart in the figure of Stewart Ansell; Sawston, again representing insincere conventionality, pretentious "culture" and the worship of the false gods of prestige and success, has its human embodiment in Herbert Pembroke, the schoolmaster, and his sister Agnes; while Wiltshire, which stands for the basic touchstone of nature, reality, the earth, is humanly projected into the figure of Stephen Wonham, the healthy, unreflective pagan. Rickie, the little lame hero of the book, is drawn in turn into the orbit of each of these worlds and undergoes an inward struggle which, although it is more desperate and emotionally intensified, is not unlike that of Lucy Honeychurch in *A Room With a View*.

I take *The Longest Journey* to be the most interesting and complex of the novels up to the time of *Howards End*, and I think, therefore, that its inner development the most deserves study.

In many respects the theme recapitulates that of *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room With a View*; but its development is more complex, and the spiritual drama more intense. It is, no doubt, this intensity which gives the book its overcharged emotional atmosphere and its consequent queer irredescence as of something faintly morbid and perverse. For the intensity does not seem justified by the terms of the drama. Which means that the drama itself is emotionally worked up to a point at which it becomes false to the terms of reference within which the mind of the novelist is operating.

Throughout all of Forster's writings there is to be seen an unfortunate tendency to lapse, at moments when the author feels the necessity to indicate something beyond the level of human relationships in their social setting (a level upon which alone he is perfectly at ease), into "poetical" vagueness of the most embarrassing kind. An example of this is to be found early in *The Longest Journey*, when Rickie glimpses Agnes and her lover, Gerald Dawes, at a moment of erotic passion.

Rickie limped away without the sandwiches, crimson and afraid. He thought, "Do such things actually happen?" and he seemed to be looking down coloured valleys. Brighter they glowed, till gods of pure flame were born in them, and then he was looking at pinnacles of virgin snow. While Mr. Pembroke talked, the riot of fair images increased. They invaded his being and lit lamps at unsuspected shrines. Their orchestra commenced in that suburban house, where he had to stand aside for a maid to carry in the luncheon. Music flowed past him like a river. He stood at the springs of creation and heard the primeval monotony. Then an obscure instrument gave out a little phrase. The river continued unheeding. The phrase was repeated, and a listener might know it was a fragment of the Tune of tunes. Nobler instruments accepted it, the clarionet protected, the brass encouraged, and it rose to the surface to the whisper of violins. In full unison was Love born, flame of the flame, flushing the dark river beneath him and the virgin snows above. His wings were infinite, his youth eternal; the sun was a jewel on his finger as he passed it in benediction over the world. Creation, no longer monotonous, acclaimed him, in widening melody, in brighter radiances. Was Love a column of fire? Was he a torrent of song? Was he greater than either—the touch of a man on a woman?

Forster's books abound in passages of this kind, which, however, are merely an intensification of his normal "sensitive" and "charming" style.* The prevalence of this sort of false, over-ripe writing indicates some basic uncertainty in Forster's grasp of life, and to apprehend the roots of that uncertainty it is necessary to investigate the disparity between the religious drama which he unfolds and the ultimate principles to which it is referred.

What are the characteristics of this religious drama? First of all, it proffers the possibilities of salvation or of damnation, as we have seen in

* On the question of Forster's "charm", I find myself endorsing Laura Riding's remarks concerning *A Room With a View*. "Before reading this book I had met Mr. Forster and found him charming; the book was recommended to me by my friends as a charming book. I read it. I could not deny that it was charming. Yet it was to me unpleasantly painful to read. It was too charming. . . . But the truth is that it affected me in the same way as would the sight of a tenderly and exquisitely ripe pimple. I longed to squeeze it and have done with it."—*Anarchism is Not Enough*, p. 50.

the passages quoted above concerning respectively Philip Herriton and Lucy Honeychurch. Philip, granted a vision of "infinite pity and . . . majesty" (which, incidentally, had an erotic source), "underwent conversion. He was saved." Lucy, consequent upon a denial and a lie, joins "the vast armies of the benighted" and "the night received her". In *The Longest Journey* there are indications that the issue of salvation depends upon the acceptance or rejection of a "symbolic moment".

It seems to me (says Rickie) that here and there in life we meet with a person or incident that is symbolical. It's nothing in itself, yet for the moment it stands for some eternal principle. We accept it, at whatever cost, and we have accepted life. But if we are frightened and reject it, the moment, so to speak, passes: the symbol is never offered again.

The symbol, for Rickie, was his illegitimate half-brother, Stephen. When his kinship with Stephen is revealed to him (although he is then under the mistaken impression that Stephen was the child of his father, whom he hated) he is inexpressibly shocked and disgusted, but his better impulse is to acknowledge him honestly and to inform him of the relationship. The impulse is quashed by Agnes, and Rickie succumbs inwardly to the false life represented by Sawston. When a later opportunity presents itself of acknowledging Stephen, and he again fails at the crisis, we are told that "he remained conscientious and decent, but the spiritual part of him proceeded towards ruin." His inner ruination continues, but is interrupted by Stephen's appearance at Sawston, coincident with that of Ansell; who—when Stephen is callously turned away by Agnes—publicly denounces the inhumanity and hypocrisy of Rickie, and there follows Rickie's abandonment of the Sawston life and his reconciliation with Stephen, in which we must presumably see his movement towards salvation.

Stephen, then, in this novel, is the touchstone of reality. He is the "elemental character" who "sees straight through perplexities and complications, who is utterly percipient of the reality behind appearances, both in matters of general truth and of incidents in the story", to quote from Burra's essay: and as this essay has Forster's own approval it may be illuminating to consider what further is said in it about Stephen.

In the person of Stephen (writes Burra) physical strength is exalted into the most exciting beauty and the whole novel reminds one constantly of the work which Lawrence produced a few years later.

When he makes his first appearance, a third of the way through the book, the writing is lifted up like music to herald his approach. He is the product of an intensely passionate imagination working upon closely recorded detail of behaviour and conduct. He is life, at the centre and at the circumference—he is the world's essential simplicity, transformed by the author's vision. His significance is clear to the reader at once; no other character—except Mrs. Failing when the mood is on her—perceives it, until Ansell, the articulate philosopher, sums him up.

This is how Ansell sums him up—and possibly too it is an illustration of how the writing is "lifted up like music" when he appears:

A silence, akin to poetry, invaded Ansell. Was it only a pose to like this man, or was he really wonderful? He was not romantic, for Romance is a figure with outstretched hands, yearning for the unattainable. Certain figures of the Greeks, to whom we continually return, suggested him a little. One expected nothing of him—no purity

of phrase nor swift-edged thought. Yet the conviction grew that he had been back somewhere—back to some table of the gods, spread in a field where there is no noise, and that he belonged for ever to the guests with whom he had eaten.

This, then, is the touchstone of reality and of salvation which Forster proposes; and it is not difficult to see that it is not sufficient: it does not justify the emotional intensity of the drama which is indicated as taking place in Rickie's soul. Between the poles of conventionality and naturalness there is room for drama of a sort, but not a drama impregnated with the highly-pitched emotional excitement of *The Longest Journey*, or even indeed that of the other two novels. This is not to say that the drama which is proposed is intrinsically unreal; only that it is made unreal by being set in such limited and lateral perspectives: the drama is too intense for the slight terms of reference. A spiritual conflict is imported into a naturalistic framework, and the effect cannot be but one of sentimentality and falsification.

This confusion of the spiritual and the naturalistic runs throughout the earlier novels. As in D. H. Lawrence, although Lawrence steered clear of Forster's irrelevant sweetness and charm, spiritual attributes are conferred upon biological phenomena. Thus, in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Philip's "conversion" follows upon the erotic emotions stirred in Caroline Abbott by the frankly sensual Gino. In the same way, in *The Longest Journey*, not only is Rickie's personal drama initiated by his witnessing of the erotic passage between Agnes and Gerald Dawes, but the acceptance or affirmation upon which his salvation depends, centres around the result of his dead mother's illicit intercourse with her former lover—something of a Lady Chatterly situation. The importance which Forster confers upon sexual passion is shown both by the excessive excitement with which he approaches it, and the way in which he connects it with violent death—the finality of death being utilised to confer something of its own ultimate or absolute character upon the emotion stirred by sex.

To endow conventionalism with all the attributes of the powers of darkness is, if course, grossly to overstate the matter, although once more it is necessary to insist that it is Forster's terms of reference which are insufficient for the intensity of the drama which takes place within them rather than the drama itself that is intrinsically unjustified. The world represented by the word "Sawston" has genuine undercurrents of evil which we are made to feel, but which, however, are simply not explicable in the terms of Nature versus Convention which are proposed. When we encounter such a sentence as this—

Then he (i.e., Rickie) . . . prayed passionately, for he knew that the conventions would claim him soon . . .

we at once feel the somewhat ridiculous inadequacy of the antithesis which provides the frame of reference for the novel.

Not only in *The Longest Journey* is the question of salvation (raised in the action of the narrative and brought to an arbitrary conclusion there) left with a good many loose ends flying: the same is true of the other novels. What is to happen to Philip Herriton, now that his eyes have been opened to the wonder and beauty of life? What will happen to Lucy

and George Emerson now that their difficulties are over and they are happily married? It is hard to see any more finality in their "saved" state than that implied in the surely insufficient and question-begging symbol, towards the end of *The Longest Journey*, of "Wiltshire"—the life of pastoral satisfactions.

The incompleteness and indeed the reversibility of Forster's moral symbolism is shown in his "realistic" confusion of the attributes of the "good" and "bad" types. Having said, as Burra says in his essay, that Forster introduces an "elemental" character into each of his books, whose wisdom "puts into ironic contrast the errors and illusions of the rest", and having pointed out that "In the case of the men the stress is laid on the athletic, of the women on the intuitive", one can point to characters who possess the external evidences of these qualities, and who yet turn out to be on the wrong side of the moral fence. George Emerson, Gino and Stephen may be said to be "athletic", and therefore on the side of the "real". But equally athletic, though by no means on the side of the real, are Gerald Dawes and Agnes, while Stewart Ansell, undoubtedly a touchstone of spiritual truth, is not athletic at all. Similarly, in the case of the "intuitive" women. Of them, Mrs. Moore and Mrs. Wilcox and perhaps Mrs. Honeychurch are recognizably "good" characters, while Mrs. Failing, a woman of the same basic type, and who possesses the additional symbolical advantage of living in Wiltshire, is as recognizably "bad". One might compare also Cecil Vyse with Philip Herriton and Stewart Ansell. This confusion is true to life, no doubt, but it is not true to the symbolical pattern of the novels, and it is necessary to ask what are the reasons for this confusion.

The most plausible explanation of Forster's "realistic" confusion of good and bad types (a confusion which, it must be repeated, is out of place in a symbolical setting) lies in the very plain fact that the middle-class existence which Forster portrays, the life of the irresponsible, moneyed, parasitical bourgeoisie, is false, because it is based upon social falsehood, and nothing can ever be made really right within it. Consequently, no stable system of moral symbolism can be erected upon it.

This is not to say that his characters are by that fact deprived of the possibility of spiritual struggle; only that such a struggle which takes place within a spiritual arena circumscribed by its reference to the framework of their false social order, and whose outcome does not result in an overthrowing or a repudiation of the limits set around their lives by their privileged social and economic position, is thereby rendered devoid of real and radical significance. The life of Forster's characters, as members of the English upper-middle classes, is based on falsehood because it is based on unearned income, derived from nameless and unmentioned sources, and all their independence, freedom, culture, "personal relationships" are only made possible by this fact. Their lives are lived in a watertight system abstracted from the larger life of society as a whole. They are out of touch with humanity, carefully, though for the most part unconsciously, preserving themselves, by means of their mental circumscriptions and social codes, from all encroachment of the painful and upsetting actualities which make their privileged existence possible. Unlike the rich of other times,

their privileges carry with them no burden of responsibility, and thus no concrete social sanction. The penalty they pay for their social advantages is a heavy one—a fundamental unreality which vitiates the personal dramas which take place in the closed social circuit to which they are condemned. For it is obvious that an inner spiritual change which affects one's attitude to one or two other selected persons only, and does not extend itself to include literally every other human being irrespective of social distinction (and this has obvious political implications) is invalidated from the start. But at the point at which some attempt to deal with this question would seem necessary, Forster brings his stories to a close.

It is not difficult to perceive the connection existing between the false social circumstances which set limits to reality for the sake of their own perpetuation, and the inhibiting factors which prevent Forster from reaching out to ultimates for the validation of his religious drama. The novelist, despite his perception of the reality of personal struggle towards salvation, is himself unable to transcend the pattern imposed on reality by the self-interest of the class to which he belongs, and instead, therefore, of permitting the drama with which he is concerned to break through the pattern and centre itself within the perspectives of reality, which are absolute perspectives, and which alone will justify a *spiritual* drama, he curtails the perspectives themselves and attempts to persuade himself and his readers that the drama takes place between the poles of Nature and Convention, with Nature filling the place of God, or the Absolute.* The novelist's own awareness that this will not justify a real spiritual dynamism in his characters must eventually follow.

* Of all the characters in the early novels who represent "the real" as against "the pretended", not one derives his sanction from any other than a natural principle. Stephen and Gino are a direct appeal to biological, not to say physiological, values. In the case of Stephen it is made clear that he is a crude atheist, while Ansell is evidently an ethical materialist. Old Mr. Emerson, a religious figure, is an old-fashioned agnostic radical. The clearest insight, however, into Forster's religiosity is to be derived from a study of his early short stories where Nature is deified as Pan and conventionalism is brought up against the a-moral universe of dryads, mermaids and satyrs.

(This essay will be concluded in the next volume of NOW)

Julian Symons

Writing and Society

I.

WRITING AND THE READER

I should like to say rather *Writing and Socialism*: but before we can profitably suggest links between creative writing and Socialism we need some socialist examples. Until they exist (and I take it as obvious that there is no body of creative writing in the past or present that we can call, specifically, Socialist writing) our conjectures must of necessity be vague and unsatisfying: practice in creative writing always precedes elucidation and precept, and it is sensible to suppose that we can most usefully consider the literature of the past in relation to the conditions in which it was composed, rather than in relation to the conditions of an uncertain future. The questions I wish to pose then, are: At what point does the art of literature touch our lives as a factor in society? How far is literature independent of the circumstances in which it is composed, and when the spark has been touched off, when "literature" enters "society", what is the result? What is its effect upon the social structure? How nearly has Shelley's typically abstract phrase about poets being the unacknowledged legislators of mankind any approach to truth?

A work of literature, or any other artistic work, appears first as a social event: it comes into being as a piece of history, the very small, more or less permanent product of an individual mind or sometimes of a group of minds; every literary work is a fragment of autobiography, revealing the various experiences to which its creator has been subjected and the way in which he has assimilated them, and it is also in a quite literal sense something *new*, differing from other creative works to the extent that its creator's mind differs from other minds. From that central point which is the work itself progress is centrifugal; the work is read and criticised, it affects in some degree the life of the time, and produces its own commentaries and exegesis. Some writing lies fallow for a hundred years, to reappear in a period that finds in it something profitable or congenial; some writing lies fallow, if that is the word, for ever.

A work of literature is a social object: most artists are deceived into denying this simple fact. There is no doubt that the writer of an epic poem, a romantic novel or an Elizabethan play had generally other ends in view than those of social utility: those ends, so far as they are consciously sought, may be generally summed up under the headings of money and fame. These two spurs are present, in some degree, in almost all literary work: the genius of the great Elizabethans was forced into the channel of drama by a combination of causes, of which the chief was surely

that the writing of plays afforded them a certain living; and the desire of present or posthumous fame has tempted many writers to put pen to paper who might otherwise have remained mercifully silent. But the written word has an effect which is something separable from its writer's intention; and this is true not only of works which have a specifically moral or instructional purpose, about which there need be no argument (such as *Gulliver's Travels* or *Pilgrim's Progress*, for which we have evolved in the last two hundred years a whole set of references that would have astonished their authors), but also of writings whose value we customarily consider as purely aesthetic.

Does any social value inhere in a lyric or a fantasy, in *Vathek* or the poems of Campion? It seems difficult to escape the conclusion that the strength of some lyric poetry is independent of any possible relation to society:

Kind are her answers,
But her performance keeps no day,
Breaks time as dancers.
From their own music when they stray.

The effect of this song, of Nashe's "Prayer in Time of Pestilence", and of some other songs and poems, is immediate, and seems at first to be something more than human, inherent in the words themselves, and unconnected with what we call thought. If we talk of "beauty" in relation to a work of art we commonly mean something of this thin and exquisite nature; and some critics regard such poetry and the type of ornamental fantasy of which *Vathek* is a brilliant example, as the highest, because the purest, reach of art. But even this pure art is something which is shaped and made by the time in which it is produced: a twentieth-century Beckford would write *Vathek* very differently, our twentieth-century Campion is perhaps Cole Porter. May we not suspect, at least, that these few works of "pure" literature obtain their character of universality not because they are independent of the experience of any time at all, but precisely because they convey to us sharply, though within a narrow range, the experience of their own time as it was felt by a man of acute sensibility. Is it not the supreme value of the pure artist that he conveys to us the sense of what it felt like to be Campion or Beckford in the early seventeenth and nineteenth centuries? So that art which is apparently objectively "pure" is found at least to gain its effects from the highly subjective nature of the artist. The purity of Campion's art comes chiefly from the fact that, much more than any other Elizabethan writer of lyrics, he leaves out everything but himself; employing a much more limited vocabulary, and possessed of a more delicate rhythmical sense than any of his contemporaries except Shakespeare, Campion wrote lyrics which are unequalled within the narrow range of their perfection. When we talk of the universal character of art, however, we commonly refer to work quite different from Campion's: to writing which is so broadly inclusive that it seems to cover all human ideas and aspirations and thereby to have a value which remains permanent, regardless of time or place. Shakespeare is of course the great type of the "universal" artist: but this character of universal appeal is claimed regularly by all our dullest critics for many of our worst writers. The highest praise a critic in the *Howl*, the *Shout* or the *Blast* can give to a book is to

say that it will "live", and he means by this, although he may have become so bemused with writing the words that he is frequently unable to realise it, that it will be understood and appreciated in other times and places than our own.

Now, it is true that the greatest art is characterised by the universality of its appeal: but equally there is no doubt that the nature of this appeal varies greatly from century to century and even from generation to generation: it is not at all the *same* appeal in different periods, and very many great writers who were not quite the "greatest" have found the philosophy of life expressed in their work, which in their middle age was pronounced mature and satisfying, regarded in their late years as merely dull and smug. Such changes are commonplaces: it is not a commonplace, but it is not the less true, that their basis is always a social one, a shift in language (which is a social instrument) or in thought. The universal nature of Shakespeare's art is clear; the great William provided something for everybody, tragedy, historical spectacle and smutty comedy, he took no sides in the literary quarrels of his age, his personal opinion about almost any controversial subject is still matter for speculation, he had a broad, happy gift of generalisation which lends an appearance of clarity to his most difficult passages; these characteristics, more than his humour, his varied and amazing imagery or his skill in dramatic construction, are responsible for the popularity of Shakespeare's plays on the English stage. Yet with all these advantages his reputation has suffered surprising changes and vicissitudes; Elizabethan and Jacobean critics generally considered Shakespeare not so great a playwright as Jonson, Restoration dramatists had no hesitation at all in altering many of the plays to eliminate crudities in their language and construction, and not until the nineteenth century was writing about Shakespeare reduced to simple adulation. Our own view of the predominant features of Shakespeare's genius is, it is not necessary to emphasize, as different as possible from that of Lamb or Hazlitt. No one of these views is to be regarded particularly as "right" or "wrong"; each view is to be appraised on the basis of its own range of ideas correlated with objective facts, not upon the basis of our own particular conceptions; each is an indirect expression of the social ideas of the time, applied to Shakespeare. The "immortality" of Shakespeare's work is a real fact: but that immortality has not the changeless quality that most people give to it, it has very different bases at different times: that is the real point.

The thing, certainly, the thing that keeps a writer's work more or less permanently viable in this chameleon quality of change. It would seem that we must grant that some books do contain much more than their writers consciously put into them; and that this is even the case with writers whose genius is apparently confined within a small surface area. The novels of Jane Austen and Henry James, for instance, have a depth of meaning and reality for us which is quite different (not necessarily greater) from the meaning they had thirty years ago, or that Jane Austen's had a hundred years ago. What makes Jane Austen's description of genteel English life and manners so much superior to Mrs. Gaskell's? There is a wonderful dry calm in the air of her novels which is hardly met with elsewhere in English literature—the actions of D'Arcy or Emma or

Catherine Morecambe are seen with a sharper eye and a tongue more cool than those of any other English novelist; but the thing which for us finally puts Jane Austen a mile away from her fellow-novelists is not her brilliant but limited power in delineation of character nor her delightful but not inimitable humour, but her astonishing, appalling and often unconscious description of the cash nexus at work in English society. The same thing is to be found in the novels of Henry James: the money matters which are the basis of almost all Jane Austen's plots are found at work in a much more menacing, though ever so discreetly veiled way in *The Awkward Age* or *The Wings of the Dove*. Jane Austen and Henry James appeal to us as almost perfect artists of an expanding capitalism at two different stages: they reveal in their wonderfully-contrived fictions, without at all intending to do so, some of the very bones of society, its essential structure; it is a mark of their sensitiveness and genius as artists that they convey to us such subtle insights into a form of society to which their conscious adherence was profound and deep. It cannot be stressed too strongly that for any slightly percipient reader the work of Jane Austen and Henry James presents now quite a different appearance from that it presented in, say, 1911; or one could put it in a way more pleasing to the artist by saying that the reader is now, of necessity, a different reader.

Jane Austen and Henry James (and in a lesser degree Trollope) are notable examples of writers whose art is vitally rooted in the form of society under which they worked; it is perfectly true that a mixed bag taken at random of a dozen poets and novelists would not reveal so obviously the changes wrought by social events in the reader's viewpoint. Yet these changes are to be found for the searching, and they are always the cause, though sometimes at one remove, of any considerable alteration in critical opinion. Do we dislike the whimsical sentimentality of Lamb and the lush preciousness of Dante Gabriel Rossetti? I am over-simplifying a little, but only a little, when I say that we dislike them because we have experienced two wars and an economic crisis in the last thirty years, which have rendered the attitudes from which they wrote unbearably distasteful to us. It is broadly true that the reader's attitude to any writer, living or dead, is conditioned first by the circumstances of the reader's own life, and secondly by the nature of the public events through which he has lived. The great mass of creative writing is renewed, and appears altered, to a fresh generation of readers, at intervals which do not exceed fifty years: in our time in twenty years, or less.

For the artist, however, art is not generally a conscious social activity, but an unconscious autobiographical game.

II.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL GAME

Those who adhere to an idealist or magical view of art, who believe that an artist is moved by an obscure daemon or by inspiration, that a work of art is essentially a non-logical composition, will be shocked by this view of the roots of creative writing. It will be clear, I hope, that this essay is not informed by such idealism; as in the first part of the essay I have tried to show the social links that bind the reader to a work of art,

in this part I shall indicate the ties between art and the often incorrigibly wayward artist. It is a pleasure as well as a duty to shock those people, more numerous alas than one might hope, who believe that a work of art is the product of some form of transcendental pact between a gifted human being and unseen powers, that the artist's "purpose" is the creation of "beauty", or who can say of artists that "Through the clear waters of their being we look down on the tainted, polluted mud of their actions, and we see how maimed, how blundering, how blind, is the world of action compared to the world of being". (1) This essay is informed by the view that works of art are no more, as they are nothing less, than a formidable and important part of the total experience of mankind as a social entity, and that all works of art produced after the Middle Ages, and many of those produced before, are to be comprehended in terms of the life of the individual artist and the life of his time.

It is important for a clear consideration of the artist's relation to his work to separate "art" from the artist's view of it, just as it is important when we discuss the conditions most favourable for the production of artistic work to keep the discussion clear of what artists think are favourable conditions.

The freedom of the artist is a phrase that we have heard very often in the last fifty years: but it is a phrase that has no effective meaning unless it is related to a specific end: freedom of speech, for instance, for the purpose of expressing radical criticism of certain existing institutions. But the phrase *freedom of the artist* refers generally to an anarchistic personal freedom which is demanded for all artists on the ground that they will produce finer works of art if they are absolutely "free", in a personal and economic sense, in their lives. Of this conjecture it can be said with certainty that the artist can never be free *enough*—that for the artist's freedom to be effective everybody else should be free too—and that the experience of history would seem to show that the finest art has been produced under conditions in which freedom was sharply limited. At the same time it should be recognised that the artist's desire for freedom has had often a good effect on his art.

Not unconnected with the desire of most artists for a freedom that is in part unattainable and in part a meaningless abstraction, is the fact that writers and painters frequently assign to themselves motives for their work that are transparently untrue. Trollope shocked the sensibilities of a generation of aesthetes when he declared in his *Autobiography* that his conscious motive for writing was to make money: yet, as has been mentioned earlier, there is no doubt at all that the two most powerful conscious spurs to the production of creative writing and painting are money and fame. Artists *think*, however, that they write, paint and compose for all sorts of reasons which are not so much incorrect as irrelevant; generally they have believed that they worked to reveal the nature of some abstraction like truth, beauty or goodness, occasionally to indicate a better way of living or consciously to give artistic body to a philosophy of life. All of these immaterial motives for the production of art have their basis in that

(1) Mr. Stephen Spender, writing of Keats, Milton and Byron.

part of the unconscious in which the practice of art may be identified with the playing of games. Such an identification is not novel; but it is usually rejected by artists and critics as a little mean and undignified.

The origins of painting and music, even more clearly than the spoken, sung and written origins of literature, show that art is a means of regulating an unsatisfactory or badly-balanced emotional condition, a method used by the individual of aligning his relations with the universe. There are many theories of the origins of art—that is to say, of the precise stimuli that ordered the forms in which pictorial and plastic art first appeared, of how nearly early art was representational, abstract or decorative, and what part simple accident played in its development; but the characteristic that joins all the arts is the quality of rhythm, manifested in the construction of a formal pattern by means of variations from a general norm. In early plastic and musical art variations hardly exist; there is in plastic art a norm of repeated lines, or notches, or a crude attempt at representation, in music an incantatory effect obtained chiefly by repetition of notes and phrases. The development of rhythmical variations keeps pace, more or less, with the development of society; in our own time there has been such an increase in the number and complexity of variations that the norm may almost be said temporarily to have disappeared. Rejection of all restraining influences in literature and painting (of rhyme in poetry, of recognised “form” in the novel, and of representational restrictions in painting) has led to attempts to establish a norm of artificial simplicity; the poems of Miss Laura Riding, and most abstract paintings, meet with our admiration (if they do) precisely because they ignore much of what goes on around us, and adopt a norm of their own. It is wrong to call such art escapist: it does not consciously escape, because it is never consciously aware of, the central artistic problems of our time.

The abstraction of Miss Riding’s pure and Puritan poetry, and of the arrangements of wire, glass or stone presented for our attention by abstract artists, is that they appear to suggest a problem that has to be solved. They suggest, frequently without the artist intending that they should do so, a mystery which in fact cannot be solved; they are conceived in terms which, as nearly as their human creators can make them so, are not terms of human reference. Within the hard intellectual shell in which the poems of Mr. William Empson are wrapped is always a nut of intellectual meaning, a meaning which the reader may feel not to have been worth the trouble of investigation, but which is always recognisably there; in the poems of Miss Riding there is no such interior nut of meaning, nothing whatever except *the thing itself*. It may be said truly that in an odd backhanded way this idea of an airtight, vacuum-filled art does approach, much more closely than art does in fact, the popular idea of art as an activity in many ways separated from normal living. These abstractionists play a game of their own, a game that has had important and often beneficial results for the audience during the last thirty years, but that has been for its practitioners generally unprofitable and sterile.

In art of such a rarefied nature a barrier is more or less consciously placed between living and the practice of art. For most artists there is no such barrier: art is for them an extension of the possibilities of living,

at once a compensation for the inadequacies in their lives and a means of fulfilment by which those inadequacies are more or less triumphantly overcome. The function of the ordinary game as an escape-mechanism is very obvious: it is in its results—in the finished product and its centrifugal effect on the objective world—rather than in its patterned and rhythmical conception and execution that art differs from such games as, say, cricket and table-tennis, in which the maintenance of a rhythm of play is necessary and which, like art, have a whole technical language and apparatus of their own. For the artist indeed (not for his audience) the achievement of success must always *appear* to be a technical matter: in this sense Eric Gill's definition of the artist as a craftsman is exact and good. It follows that the analysis of any work of art must also be primarily technical: words or paint are the means by which this elaborate and complicated game is played. The fact that these words and paint are used in the exercise of the imagination renders the game more vivid, but does not make it radically divergent in kind from those other games in which also the imagination is stretched so far as it will go; the difference is that an artist's imagination stretches much further.

It is hardly possible to outline with precision the function and powers of art in their effect on the artist; the effect varies so greatly with individual artists and in various periods that only general statements are possible. Speaking generally, it may be said that the uses of art for the artist vary within the broad limits of three different artist types, who may be represented conveniently by Trollope, A. E. Housman and Blake, the extrovert, introvert and mentally unbalanced. Trollope is an exaggerated type of extrovert artist—the artist who is also a man of business, who regards his work in a severely practical manner, and professes to see his duty as an artist as simply a duty to his public. There can be few artists who have worked, like Trollope, to a schedule, preparing a table in the form of a diary for the book he was writing, and entering in it daily the number of pages written: "According to circumstances, I have allotted myself so many pages a week . . . and as a page is an ambiguous term my page has been made to contain 250 words . . . I have prided myself on completing my work exactly within the proposed dimensions." It would seem that for such a man writing must be simply a craft like any other: and that is certainly the way in which Trollope regarded his work. But everyone who has read an account of Trollope's early life and sufferings from poverty, neglect and gaucheness, or who has read his *Autobiography*, that curious book which tells us all we need to know about him except how he ever had imagination sufficient to draw a living character, will know that his literary 'background' is not so simple. Upon what rational grounds can we explain his persistence in writing a fourth novel, *The Warden*, after the complete failure of his first three books? Trollope, more than most extroverts, needed an assurance of his own importance, and obtained that assurance by writing: that is not to say that his novels reflect any character other than the bluff, loud-voiced, good-natured exterior which he presented to the world. They do not: but there is no doubt that they added a flavouring of importance to Trollope's life, without which he would have been a less happy man.

For the introvert, and the introvert who is also obviously lacking in mental balance, such a satisfactory reconciliation of literature and personal life is rarely achieved. For A. E. Housman writing poetry did something to redress the bad fortune that had made him a don instead of a red-coated soldier, for Blake writing and painting helped to relieve the unbalanced oddity of his imagination: but the separation between their life and their work is very obvious. Housman's images of brave soldiers, faithless to the girls who are forever loving and losing them, are in every way fictitious; they have a purely fictional relation to the life of the don, and achieve their effects of authenticity, in spite of the literary language in which they are frequently written, by the force of Housman's imagination, and by his extraordinary technical skill. Blake achieved as an artist a completeness denied to Housman; his artistic world has for us, certainly, the tone of reality—but this was a tone obtained at the expense of Blake's reason. That is not to say that Blake would have been a more rational man if he had never painted a picture or written a poem: but such a question is irrelevant. Art is for the artist never more than a means of expression, involuntary, personal, subjective and useless.

Louis Adeane

Psychoanalysis and Government (Part II)

GOVERNMENT IN PRACTICE: GERMANY.

Hitherto the problem of government has been treated from a merely theoretical standpoint. It is time to examine the reality and see whether our hypotheses, derived from facts known about the individual, do actually make more understandable the movement of society and its governments. Such a survey must necessarily be inadequate, and every point considered should be regarded as being only the approach to a ramification which cannot be pursued here. The case of post-war Germany is well-adapted to our purpose, for a glance at its historical context will show it to be not an isolated phenomenon but the epitome of modern social development.

Previous to the first world war the governments of Europe were principally concerned with external aggression, the acquisition of colonies abroad. The governments in question were not yet even politically representative of the people they purported to rule; in fact they were the leaders of a minority group within each of their borders. For the average person, the State, symbolised by coronets and carriages, directly affected only a small part of life, where it stood for security and a righteous respectability;

since it had not yet turned its whole attention inward to the society it was supposed to symbolise its pretensions were still accepted. The fundamental social unit was the family, and larger groups were subsidiary to the nation as a whole—governments even judged the disputes between these groups in an apparently neutral way. Not only had the individuals in society not displaced their allegiance from the many external authorities to the single one, but—for internal problems were as yet unaccentuated by external frustration—they had not yet projected these problems with any unusual force upon the objective world. Society had not yet reached the phase of which Mussolini could say: "The State becomes the conscience and will of the people." (1)

For the comparatively restricted groups who were intimately bound up with government, the overseas colonising was of considerable psychological—as well as economic—importance. It provided an outlet for a stream of potential discontents whose disaffection would have immediately threatened the group-structure and therefore the State. The channel hardened into a basis for a group way of life, a miniature society pre-occupied with the Army or planter or merchant career; in the pre-war decade the disciples of this way of life joined (in Germany) the Navy League or some similar militarist organisation. In England its influence contributed to education, particularly the training of those who later became public figures. The public outside these ruling-class groups were prepared for the future by a mass of popular fiction which became almost saga-history.

The relatively stable state of affairs was rapidly being undermined by economic and other social changes. Imperialism was reaching its climax; it is unnecessary to retrace the familiar outlines of the process or dwell upon its psychological results at home. A factor which is usually underestimated was the closing of those fields for the otherwise frustrated which have been mentioned above, a factor especially important after the war for the Germans, whose colonies were confiscated and whose middle-class, which had taken over the ideology of the previous generation's upper class, was simultaneously threatened by events nearer home. The strength of the cry for *lebensraum*, economically unjustifiable except for minority interests, becomes explicable when the psychological necessities of these groups are taken into account. Far more important was the fall in the birthrate and the rise in the expectation of life, which for most European communities meant that the older age groups were moving into a strengthened position of dominance and the younger, hampered in development by an increased economic burden, becoming more tightly bound to infantile behaviour patterns and therefore to dependence on the old. Taking the standpoint of the young, and referring the position to our previous terms, we can see the first-type authority, and therefore the second, gaining power and depth; consequently we may expect, a generation later, an increased drive in favour of strong external government and appropriate changes in the objective casting of society. If in addition external events show the first type to be more than usually inadequate, then the over-evaluated second will react all the more violently; while displaying a contempt for whatever form of objective authority is associated with the first, it will demand the setting up of a government even harsher than the

one it despises. In Europe the process has been repeated in political terms twice, ending in each case with war. The deepened ferocity of the second pendulum swing is due to the intervention of the 1929-33 depression, which brought to Germany's middle class the disillusionment with the first-type authority mentioned above. In other countries the process was slower but no less sure.

In all the combatant countries the psychological concomitants of the first world war were the destruction of the security and prestige of the family and a weakening of the individual's ties with sectional, political and religious groups. Lonely, insecure, lacking means of expression, the ordinary man transferred his instinctive desires to the all-accommodating national unit and there achieved a distorted satisfaction. Government grew strong, and when the war ended it not only preserved many of the new material positions it had won, but also its hold on men's minds. Thus though the national groups had apparently fallen apart and the energies of their members been absorbed in subsidiary interests, the functioning of the latter was now clearly seen in a national-unit context, so that the extension of a subsidiary group might threaten a government while strengthening Government itself. Consequently society found itself moving toward centralisation; authoritarian politics—the disciplined party and the dominated Trade Union—trode heavily on to the European stage,

It is possible now to narrow our survey to Germany itself. The attitude of the victorious powers had prolonged artificially the national-unit consciousness mentioned above. In consequence the economic crash which followed had a similar effect on the middle classes to that of the war. They saw their class frustration in terms of national frustration, and blamed, even more than the working class or the possessing class, the Versailles Treaty. Simultaneously, however, the slump caused a further decline in the value of those national symbols which were rooted emotionally in the past, i.e. the idea of the monarchy. Adults with families, that first-type authority which had drawn so much of its support from the third and fourth, now weakened as they weakened, and the younger generation found it easy to disregard them. With equal readiness, it seemed, they could ignore the claims of the ego-ideal which had been moulded upon the first-type standards; actually these claims were sucked into the idealistic under-current of fascism. Thus the way was opened for a group which would combine a retaliatory nationalism with a hatred for the past and the old; which would threaten both the hereditary and the monopolistic owning class, and which would permit an initial lawlessness for the individual within a framework of ascetic devotion to an externalised ideal. The last condition was the basis for the two previous ones, and reflected amongst other things the difference between the real and imagined strengths of the second-type authority. Hitler rose to power by offering to satisfy, for his class, the distorted desires by which he himself was driven.

The position for the working class had been rather different. The tendency to submerge their separate aims in the war's collective effort had been less marked than that of the middle class, for their political activity had made them more conscious of themselves as a group existing within, but distinct from, the nation. The fall of the monarchy was already a desirable event for them; they came out of the war without any particular

bitterness against the Allies but with their separatist feelings intensified by the apparent successes of the workers abroad. The depression strengthened this tendency: whereas the middle classes identified themselves with Germany, and their frustration with national defeat, the workers inclined rather to project their problems in terms of the future of the international working class, and to place the responsibility for their difficulties upon the capitalist owners. These difficulties, it should be pointed out, were not as overwhelming for them as for the bourgeoisie, which had been used to a higher living standard, and more important, an emotional basis for security. Comparatively considered, the workers were less a prey to a sense of individual helplessness and the disintegration of family life, though the almost unbroken series of political defeats which had followed the revolution urged them also towards support of a powerful group which would if necessary override parliamentary methods in order to expropriate the possessing class and set up a worker's state.

On the whole, therefore, the middle class was psychologically the most dynamic in Germany. Its depression into the working class weakened the latter as a group and strengthened its own influence in the working class political organisations. These, while receiving new energy, received also an increased bias towards the authoritarian aspect of their programme. During the years preceding the Hindenburg election the left-wing's internationalism was diluted also by the Nazi threat at home, the group-cathexes of its members being forced to contract to overcome the immediate danger. Through these years of street-fighting, assassination, and private torture, the sado-masochism of each side was being widened and deepened. By 1933 the essential psychological issue, that of authority, was being faced in a similar way by both communist and fascist; both were united in hatred of the social-democrats, both desired a "strong" government in power. On many secondary issues they differed only in their slogans. When one remembers also the tendency, referred to in section three of this essay, to identify the group in power with society as a whole, it is not surprising that the Left crumpled so readily before the Nazi attack.

It is unnecessary to pursue the history of German totalitarianism further; its characteristics are already familiar enough. The necessity felt by authoritarian groups in general to persecute others explains most of its atrocities and its pogroms; this necessity has already been dealt with. Its attitude to women is to some extent peculiar to the German between-wars period. But by setting its manifestations against the theoretical framework outlined in this essay, it will be seen that large-scale torture, minority persecution, the sacrifice of the individual to the group, and the other reversals of civilised behaviour are symptoms not merely of fascism, but of Government as such. They are inherent in the tension between ruler and ruled. In essence the following quotations could have emerged from not only modern Germany, but any authoritarian group in society:

"Like an illumination it comes over them that the divinity they are seeking lies in their people, hidden somewhere deep in their blood and their destiny." (2)

"You, our Fuehrer, walk among your people as their Redeemer." (3)

(Note the masochistic reference to something greater than the ego and overpowering it—blood, divinity, destiny. The guilt implicit in

the idea of redemption. The mutual awe of ruler and ruled. The divinity of people and leader.)

"Leader is the opposite of magistrate: who leads does not determine the objective arbitrarily, by himself; that is done by the led. The led are the people. But the Leader knows the goal and knows the direction . . . who carries the spirit in him, who knows the direction, that person is the Leader." (4)

(The mutual ties of leader and led: the two aspects of leadership, impressive-expressive.)

"Like a woman . . . who will submit to the strong man rather than dominate the weakling, thus the masses like the ruler rather than the suppliant. . . ." (5)

(The group as feminine. The sadistic attitude implied.)

Such quotations could be multiplied endlessly. What is important, however, is their coincidence with the neurotic attitudes which distinguish authoritarianism, that submission to Government which is characteristic of the ordinary man everywhere in western civilisation today.

GOVERNMENT IN PRACTICE: THE MANAGERIAL STATE.

Having satisfactorily related the rise of German fascism to the theoretical considerations previously advanced, it will be profitable to turn our attention to the parallel extension of government in Britain. Upon the earlier phases of this development it is unnecessary to dwell; as in the case of Germany, economic insecurity and the threat of neighbouring states, plus American "cultural" penetration, were rapidly undermining the personality of the individual and increasing its dependence on the group long before the war. The stress of the latter has carried the process to a stage almost indistinguishable from that existing under dictatorships elsewhere. Simultaneously the economic basis for totalitarianism is swiftly coming into being, and plans for its efficient functioning and control, together with appropriate systems of education and technical training, are already prepared. Our attempt here is to estimate the depth of these social currents and indicate the kind of leadership which is most likely to give them expression in the future.

The society with which we are dealing is bound together by the usual group-ties. There is general agreement on the basic psychological issues, an agreement manifested by the common beliefs in victory, national unity, no disarmament after the war, planning, increased production, etc. It has a common leader in Mr. Churchill, whose determination, virility, and energy are carefully emphasised by propaganda. Its unity and strength of purpose ("collective will" would be too allusive a phrase) is continually insisted upon. Since the beginning of the war it has had various small groups at home whom it could persecute, ranging from the conscientious objectors to Mosley. It has ritual occasions, religious and otherwise. (Two very striking tendencies in the popular dance tune have been the fusion of religious and military sentiment—"Praise the Lord," and "Target for Tonight"—and the emergence of nursery refrains as in "Jingle Jangle Jingle" and "Johnny Zero". Since dance music appeals to an overwhelming majority of the young, its influence in moulding and canalising group emotion is tremendous.) The group is of course wider than the political attitudes included in it, but its quintessential tendencies are expressed politically by its Conservative and reactionary wing.

Within this general group is a distinguishable body which includes the Trade Union outlook and the emotional drive of the Communist Party, has its own leaders in the persons of Bevin and Morrison, and is responsible for most of the emphasis on planning and production. Almost outside the society altogether move the uneasy little collections of people whose influence, political or otherwise, is only effective if it is aligned with some fairly strong trend already existing in the general group. The attitude of the latter toward these satellites is usually one of hostility.

By briefly examining the beliefs listed above we may detect the emotional drives of which they are the expression. The urge to victory has had several vicissitudes, and is strongly associated with over-evaluated images of a powerful, fascinating, and at the time of the Blitz, terrifying nature. The slogan Victory, and the "V" sign, has almost a magical, as well as a directly sexual significance. Its emotional undertones derive from the sadistic foundations of authoritarianism, and only its superficial manifestations are likely to disappear. Already these emotions have been widened to include a conscripted and vigilant future, indicating a temporarily weakened second-type authority. It should be remarked in general that the paucity of war-aims is not so much a sign of ruling class bankruptcy as an indication of group strength; "national unity" is an accurate phrase.

The emphasis on planning is a reaction from the feeling of insecurity, which in turn is closely bound to the masochistic element in the totalitarian structure. It reflects also the general pessimism regarding the future. Since this pessimism will probably be justified by a post-war trade slump, the drive towards the planned, regimented, and stable society will almost certainly be continued. The other contribution of the Left, "increased production", has no such firm foundation. It is in itself a neat displacement of personal virility on to the group, and points to a sharing of the leader's masculine role and a lagging behind the government. (Compare with the feminine masochism of the Blitz period, when the group was enormously in advance of the government over nearly every social issue.) It is extremely unlikely that this position will be sustained, though it is of importance for our survey here.

To sum up, we may expect an immediate future whose values will be those of totalitarianism, whose dynamic will be aggressive, whose preparedness is for militarism. It will be a planned society, with probably a ritualistic outlet for the inevitable revolt of the second-type authority. It will, early in its development, find a compromise between the present production drive and the factors operating against it—probably the compromise of mechanisation. The old authority-symbols (royalty, etc.) which have already lost most of their power, will degenerate to the entertainment level. We may assume further that since Russia has now become a subsidiary authority-symbol for most individuals, parallel in its overwhelming power to "national unity", there will be a political swing to the Left; such a swing, by weakening the reactionary element in the group structure, would also help canalise the rebellion of the individual conscience mentioned above.

This outline of tomorrow's psychological tendencies is endorsed by what we may expect of economic development. Planning and a large degree of public ownership will be essential if industrial disorganisation

and trade depression are not to follow the war. The recovery of export markets, and the restoring of a pre-war living standard, necessitate mechanisation; the enormous wartime output of machine tools also points in this direction.

In his book, "The Managerial Revolution", Mr. James Burnham has advanced the thesis that a new type of society is in formation, and a new type of ruling class is rising to a position of power. He gives as examples of this new society Russia, Germany and Italy; the ruling class he means is that of the managers, who have been described as "production managers, operating executives, superintendents, administrative engineers, and supervisory technicians, and in Government as commissars, bureau heads and administrators generally." (1) He says little about the psychology of such societies, contenting himself with the following description: "In place of the individual, stress turns to the 'state', the people, the folk, the race. In place of gold, labour and work. In place of private enterprise, 'socialism' or 'collectivism'. In place of 'freedom' and 'free initiative', planning. Less talk about 'rights' and 'natural rights', more about 'duties', and 'order' and discipline'. Less about 'opportunities, and more about jobs'. In addition, in these early decades of managerial society, more of the positive elements that were once part of capitalist ideology in its rising youth, but have left it in old age: destiny, the future, sacrifice, power. . . ." (2) It is obvious, that this fits almost exactly our suggestions in this section. By turning to a Fabian Research Series pamphlet, "Management in Transition" by Austin Albu, a more precise description of the managerial class in this country may be gained: "The salaries of these officials vary from five figures down to the smaller hundreds, and their authority varies over as many individuals. By class origin they vary also—some having come from the ranks of the artisans, and some from universities, or direct from middle class business families; their class loyalty, however, is predominantly with the employers." (3) During the war, the writer says, this class "has come much more directly into the service of the State, responsible to Government departments and with its actions open to public examination." (4) He goes on to point out how the managers are tending now to co-operate with the Trade Unions and to swing Leftward in their social outlook, and he gives a list of institutions, including the Ministry of Labour, whose business it is to train this class for its duties.

The Orthodox Marxist would claim that the managers, since they are not identified with a new mode of production, are not a class. We have endeavoured to show that the psychological tendencies existing today will demand expression tomorrow, and we have suggested that the managers will be identified with these new modes of expression. Their class-ideology exists already; their class-consciousness is coming into being now. They will be as ruthless as any previous ruling class in its acquisition, not necessarily of wealth, but of power. "A subtle danger exists in the very nature of the methods that the good manager must use. If he uses his personality and psychological knowledge and experience to lead and direct the activities of those over whom he has authority he may find that his powers of persuasion and mass appeal are as forceful weapons of coercion as fear of the sack, . . ." (5)

But this very ruthlessness of the rulers, this very unity of the ruled, only

makes louder the protest of the internal government, intensifies the struggle of the individual against the authoritarian group. "The quest for freedom is not a metaphysical force and cannot be explained by natural law; it is the necessary result of the process of individuation and the growth of culture. The authoritarian systems cannot do away with the basic conditions that make for the quest for freedom; neither can they exterminate the quest for freedom that springs from those conditions." (6) History is on the side of anarchism.

CONSTRUCTIVE ANARCHISM.

Many of the problems which have been skirted in this essay—the problem of freewill is obviously the most important—cannot be dealt with here. But we are now in a position to bring together those lines of thought which were abandoned earlier and to contribute them to the anarchist discussion of government and society.

We have seen that government is not merely an objective force which is imposed on men from without; on the contrary, men impose government on themselves; it exists within them and they establish it in the external world. A desirable organisation of society would be one in which not merely the institutions of authority were absent, but in which there were alternative outlets for those psychological factors making for their support. The attack on government is therefore a double-pronged attack; it must be accomplished both within and without the individual. External authority, as we have shown, is forever collapsing. Though advances towards anarchy may be made at other times, it will not be completely achieved until the fall of the outer government coincides with the weakening of the government within.

The weakening of the subjective authority may best be accomplished at its source—the child. The child's position within the family is of the utmost importance in this context, for upon it depends the future of an anarchist society. A culture which substituted a sympathy tempered with knowledge for the pity mingled with sentimentality which is the current adult attitude towards infancy would be desirable; further, it is probable that children who are allowed to mix with others at an early age, as in the creches of the Jewish Collectives in Palestine, are less inclined towards domination and submission in later life. In these creches the infants are cared for by their own parents, who take it in turns to work there. Thus the source of authority, for the child, becomes diffused until it includes all adults and ultimately the whole society; to prevent social opinion becoming too dominant, however, nursery life would have to be complemented by family life; we have already remarked that for the adult the latter is a safety valve for many impulses which might otherwise be expended functionally—instead of creatively—in a larger group. Creches of this description could only be workable in a decentralised community with perhaps the commune as a unit. "Collective parentage" is of course a feature of many peaceable primitive societies.

The projection of the subjective authority is dangerous because it imputes superhuman powers to other men or to natural processes. If the idea of authority is displaced, however, to ideals, to the abstractions concerned with social living and complete individuality, then its emotional

drive can serve a useful purpose. History has shown how easy it is for this displacement to take place; ordinary life presents examples of the successful dissociation of the abstraction and the men representing it at a particular time.

Reference has been made to the position of the artist in society. If, as the work of Jung suggests, the attachment to authority proceeds not merely from childhood but also from the collective unconscious, then the artist's function as mythmaker and interpreter becomes pre-eminently important. Divorced from instituted authority and become part of the common life, his work will, like an abstract ideal, serve in part as a magnet attracting and patterning the iron filings of otherwise dangerous impulses.

The most important theme suggested here is concerned with individuality. Men are no longer merely parts of the group. Consequently anarchism must deal with two kinds of freedom: freedom for the individual in society, and freedom for the individual as a separate unit. The authoritarian State provides the first by robbing men of the second. Only anarchy can offer them both.

"... is there a state of positive freedom in which the individual exists as an independent self and yet is not isolated but united with the world, with other men, and nature?

"We believe that there is a positive answer, that the process of growing freedom does not constitute a vicious circle, and that man can be free and yet not alone, critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet an integral part of mankind. This freedom man can attain by the realisation of his self, by being himself. . . . We believe that the realisation of the self is accomplished not only by an act of thinking, but also by the realisation of man's total personality, by the active expression of his emotional and intellectual potentialities. These potentialities are present in everybody: they become real only to the extent to which they are expressed. In other words, *positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality.*" (1)

Government in Practice

- (1) Mussolini "Il Fascismo." Quoted G. D. H. Cole "Guide to Modern Politics," p. 175.
- (2) Hitler "Zwischenspiel." Quoted "Germany puts the Clock Back," p. 202.
- (3) Hitler Youth member. Quoted "Germany puts the Clock Back," p. 249.
- (4) Duetsches Kulturrecht, Hamburg, 1936, p. 5. Quoted "Spirit and Structure of German Fascism," Chap. 3.
- (5) Hitler "Mein Kampf," p. 56.

Managerial State

- (1) Nicholas Davenport "New Statesman and Nation" 13/11/43.
- (2) Burnham "Managerial Revolution," p. 180.
- (3) Austin Albu "Management in Transition," p. 4.
- (4) Austin Albu "Management in Transition," p. 3.
- (5) Austin Albu "Management in Transition," p. 8.
- (6) Fromm "Fear of Freedom," p. 206.

Constructive Anarchism

- (1) Fromm "Fear of Freedom," p. 222.

Herbert Read

Henri Rousseau

It is a hundred years since Henri Rousseau was born, and this man who lived all his life in poverty, and received little but ridicule from his contemporaries, is now honoured as one of the great masters of the nineteenth century. His paintings are beyond the reach of all but American museums and international millionaires, and he could have lived in comfort all his days on the price which a single canvas would now fetch in the art market. It is a familiar story, and there is no special moral to be drawn from it. No conceivable form of patronage would have been kinder to Rousseau. He worked as a minor official in the customs for about twenty years and then retired on a tiny pension and painted to his heart's content for another twenty-five years. There may be modern states which would give such an artist a somewhat better pension, but only on condition that he conformed to some recognised standard or style. Rousseau was condemned to poverty, but at least he was free to realise his own vision. He was free, too, to play his violin and give musical evenings in his studio (which was also his living-room and bedroom). He seems to have been a happy man.

One or two misconceptions about this great artist are not yet dispelled. He is sometimes called an amateur, or a "Sunday painter". It is implied that his painting was a hobby. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Rousseau always described himself as "artiste-peintre", which means a professional painter. It was his ambition to become an academician, to rival the perfect "finish" of Bouguereau or Courtois, to be accepted (as he might have said) in the best circles. When he saw the Cézanne memorial exhibition in 1907 he was distressed. "I could have finished these paintings for him," he said.

Rousseau does not belong to "the modern movement", though he has no doubt had an influence on painters who do—even on Picasso and Braque. There has been much talk of his "naïveté", but the word is misleading if it implies anything childlike or incompetent. Rousseau was not even spontaneous: he was a hard worker, a meticulous craftsman. "I have been told that my work is not of this century", he wrote in a letter to the art critic, André Dupont, in 1910. "As you will understand, I cannot now change my manner which I have acquired as the result of obstinate toil. . . ." I would rather call Rousseau a *natural* painter. His nearest affinities are with folk art—with the glass-paintings, illustrated chap-books, painted pottery which represent the natural expression of untaught people throughout Europe. This is not, properly speaking, a "tradition". It is a

common language, with common characteristics. It develops organically from the basic sensibilities and laws of perception of the human being. It is a basic visual speech. Before an organised education system interfered with its natural growth, "child" art matured into "folk" art. Folk-art is merely child-art which has become adult. It becomes adult by becoming more objective—children below a certain age (12-14) are wholly subjective: they paint symbols to express their inner emotional or sensational being. When social pressures of various sorts and a maturing physique compel them to observe the objective world, a decisive struggle takes place. The mind may become wholly a slave to the objective world, and then the personality, as a unique sensitive organism, dies—the poet and the artist dies in man. Education has been generally speaking a system for perfecting this process of objectification. Rousseau was one of the exceptional people who escaped this process. His mind did not become conventionalised. At the same time, he did not remain a child, wholly confined to a subjective world. He became an adult, like any peasant. But instead of becoming a peasant-carpenter or a peasant-weaver, he became a peasant-painter. Of course, it is improper to describe a Paris customs-official as a peasant; but we can hardly call Henri Rousseau a proletarian or even a *petit-bourgeois*. He was what the sociologists call a "marginal" man.

This marginal man worked hard to become what he himself called "one of our best realist painters". In an autobiographical sketch which he prepared for a dictionary of painters, he wrote: "He has perfected himself more and more in the original manner which he adopted and he is in the process of becoming one of our best realist painters. As a characteristic mark he wears a bushy beard. He has been a member of the Independents for many years, believing that complete freedom of production should be given to any initiator whose mind aspires to the Beautiful and the Good". *

Whether what Rousseau meant by "realism" corresponds to the generally accepted meaning of the word is doubtful. Certainly he was not a naturalistic painter, intent on reproducing the exact image recorded by his visual perception of the outer world. He made a deliberate study of nature, but so does Picasso or Henry Moore, or any genuine artist who would not normally describe himself as a realist. It would be more logical, perhaps, to call an artist who confessedly "aspires to the Beautiful and the Good" an idealist. It has been said that the tropical jungles and exotic landscapes which Rousseau painted were not reminiscences of the four years he spent in Mexico as a regimental musician, but that he made accurate studies of the vegetation in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. But a Chicago professor, who has studied photographs of several pictures, reports that "the plants are conventionalised and most of them are difficult to

* Quoted from R. H. Wilenski's "Modern French Painting", which gives the best account at present available of Rousseau's career. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, has more recently published a well-illustrated monograph by Daniel Catton Rich which is fully documented and contains an excellent bibliography.

identify". It is only about a bunch of bananas that he feels any certainty. * Rousseau, in fact, was faithful to the basic forms of nature, but these forms he took and varied and re-combined in accordance with the laws of his aesthetic sensibility. The form and organisation of the picture was the determining factor. And that form was "initiated" by the artist's imagination, and in the realisation of the form imagined, the artist claimed "complete freedom".

Rousseau's achievement is primarily something to be enjoyed—simply and sensuously and by as many people as possible. But it is possible, without being too priggish, to point out "the significance of Rousseau". If what I have said above is true, he is essentially a people's painter, in a sense in which one would never apply that condescending phrase to Cézanne or Picasso. But it is not likely that the people to-day would accept and like Rousseau's paintings; they would probably feel that they were being "got at" in some way, as did the people of Paris fifty years ago. They might accept the flower-piece and some of the landscapes, but they would demand more verisimilitude in the portraits and would recoil from the surreal magic of "The Sleeping Gypsy" or "The Hunter". And what would a crowd at Wembley make of "Les Joueurs de Football"? But it is the people that is sick—sick with sophistication and conventionality, their sensibilities atrophied and their imaginations dead. This state of mental sickness in the people is due to causes which Rousseau miraculously escaped: to a social consciousness which suppresses spontaneity in the individual, to an educational system which kills the sensibility of children, to deadening labours and devitalised environment. Rousseau may not be a great artist, in the sense in which we recognise Raphael or Rembrandt or Picasso as great artists. (But in the opposite direction I would not so easily admit that he is not a great artist in the sense in which we recognise Giotto, or the great Byzantine mosaicists, or the great Chinese artists as "great".) But he is greatly significant in that he measures very exactly the dividedness of our civilisation, our schismatic culture. A true culture is indivisible. Art, in a true culture, emerges like spring water on every hillside. But Rousseau was an oasis in our desert.

* Quoted by Rich, *op. cit.* p. 64.

Henri Rousseau:
La Bougie Rose



By permission of Messrs. Alex Reid & Lefevre, New Bond St., London, W.1.



Henri Rousseau:
La Forêt Equatoriale

By permission of Alex Reid & Lefevre,
New Bond St., London, W.1.



Maxwell Armfield:
Portrait of an Owner

Valentine Penrose:
Collage



Herbert Miller

Two Fragments

(I)

THE MOST LOVELY INANIMATE OBJECT IN EXISTENCE

(Fragment from "The Air-conditioned Nightmare")

When I walk the streets of this city in which I was born and raised * I ask myself what am I doing here? What life is there for me in the midst of this stagnation? I look in the shop windows and they are filled with objects which I have no desire to own. I look at the activity of my nine million neighbours and I see it as a kind of insanity. I go to a bar for a quiet drink and a bit of enjoyable conversation and I find myself surrounded by brutes and imbeciles. I go to a cinema for relaxation and I am bored to tears. I pick up a newspaper and it is full of sensational lies, slander, gossip. In the subway I see a George Grosz parade of human caricatures. If I visit the office of a public official I have the impression that I am dealing with Al Capone's thugs and bandits. If I go to the public library the books I would like to read are not there; if I go to the art museum the pictures I would like to see are in the cellar; if I go to the concert hall the music I would like to hear is not on the programme. . . .

I speak now of the great metropolis, the cosmopolis of America. What the other cities of America lack is an infinitude beyond description or enumeration. Beyond the pale of a dozen barren centres of culture lies the wasteland, a territory so vast, so sterile, so utterly meaningless from the standpoint of human values, that the mind is appalled, the heart stopped, the tongue speechless. Only what is non-human in this "wild, wide land of mysteries" speaks of grandeur, nobility, dignity, splendour and sublimity. In the great Salt Lake of Utah there is one living creature, they say, which has found the means of surviving, and that is the shrimp. The contemporary native American leads a life homologous to that of the shrimp in the great Salt Lake. We do not know how or why he survives in a world which is turning to salt. He does not melt down with love, as Vivekananda says the Sattvikas do. The salt doll does not melt in the ocean of love; instead it turns the ocean itself into a lake of salt.

Coronado seeking the Seven Cities of Cibola found them not. No white man has found on this continent what he came in search of. The dreams of the acquisitive whites are like endless journeys through petrified forests. On the River of Mercy they were borne to their graves. On the Mountain that was God they saw the City of the Dead. Through the waters of the Prismatic Lake they stared at the Endless Caverns. They saw Mountains of Superstition and mountains of shiny, jet-black glass. The Virgin River brought them to Zion where all was lovely and inanimate, most lovely, most inanimate. From the Garden of the Gods they moved

* New York.

in heavy armour to the Place of the Bird People and saw the City of the Sky. In the Fever River they saw the Sangre de Cristo. In the Echo River they heard the Desert of Hissing Sands. In the Dismal Swamp they came upon the passion flower, the fuzzy cholla, the snow-white blossoms of the yucca, the flaming orange of the trumpet-vine. Looking for the Fountain of Youth they came upon the Lake of the Holy Ghost wherein was reflected the Rainbow Forest. At Shiprock they were shipwrecked; at Mackinac they were waterlogged; at Schroon Lake they heard the loon and the wild antelope. The Gulf was lined with Cherokee roses, bougainvillea, hibiscus. They fell through Pluto's Chasm and awoke in Sleepy Hollow. They crossed the Great Divide (with Margaret Anglin) and came to soda canyons and borax fields. In the midst of the Thundering Waters they stumbled on the Island of Goats where Martha kept her vineyard. Through the clear waters they saw jungles of kelp and phosphorescent marines. Near Avalon they saw the abalone and other shell-fish lying on the ocean floor. Looking for the Black Hills they came upon the Bad Lands. Calling upon Manitou they found a Turquoise Spring and when they drank of its waters they were turned into obsidian. Searching for the Green Table they came upon the Cliff Palace where the red man kept his Medicine Hat. Passing through the Valley of the Shenandoah they came upon the Hanging Gardens and were swallowed up by the Mammoth Cave. . . .

Endless was the trek and endless the search. As in a mirage the bright nuggets of gold lay always beyond them. They waded through poisonous swamps, they tunnelled through mountains, they reeled through scorching sands, they built natural and unnatural bridges, they erected cities overnight, they compressed steam, harnessed waterfalls, invented artificial light, exterminated invisible microbes, discovered how to juggle commodities without touching or moving them, created laws and codes in such number that to find your way among them is more difficult than for a mariner to count the stars. To what end, to what end? Ask the Indian who sits and watches, who waits and prays for our destruction.

The end is a cold, dead mystery, like Mesa Verde. We sit on the top of an Enchanted Mesa, but we forget how we got there, and what is worse, we do not know how to climb down any more. We are on top of the Mountain that was God and it is extinct—"the most lovely inanimate object in existence."

(II)

Fragment from

"THE ROSY CRUCIFIXION"

Why is it that all is so quiet? The black floral pieces are dripping with condensed milk. A man named Silverberg is chewing the lips of a mare. Another called Vittorio is mounting a ewe. A woman without name is shelling peanuts and stuffing them between her legs.

And at this same hour, almost to the minute, a dark, sleek chap nattily attired in a tropical worsted with a bright yellow tie and a white carnation in his button-hole takes his stand in front of the Hotel Astor on the third

step, leaning his weight lightly on the bamboo cane which he sports at this hour of the day.

His name is Osmanli, obviously an invented one. He has a roll of ten, twenty and fifty dollar bills in his pocket. The fragrance of an expensive toilet water emanates from the silk kerchief which cautiously protrudes from his breast pocket. He is as fresh as a daisy, dapper, cool, insolent—a real Jim Dandy. To look at him one would never suspect that he is in the pay of an ecclesiastical organisation, that his sole mission in life is to spread poison, malice, slander, that he enjoys his work, sleeps well and blossoms like the rose.

Tomorrow noon he will be at his accustomed place in Union Square, mounted on a soap box, the American flag protecting him; the foam will be drooling from his lips, his nostrils will quiver with rage, his voice will be hoarse and cracked. Every argument that man has trumped up to destroy the appeal of Communism he has at his disposal, can shake them out of his hat like a cheap magician. He is there not only to give argument, not only to spread poison and slander, but to foment trouble: he is there to create a riot, to bring on the cops, to go to court and accuse innocent people of attacking the Stars and Stripes.

When it gets too hot for him in Union Square he goes to Boston or Providence or some other American city, always wrapped in the American flag, always surrounded by his trained fomentors of discord, always protected by the shadow of the Church. A man whose origin is completely obscured, who has changed his name dozens of times, who has served all the Parties, red, white and blue, at one time or another. A man without country, without principle, without faith, without scruples. A servant of Beelzebub, a stooge, a stool pigeon, a traitor, a turn-coat. A master at confusing men's minds, an adept of the Black Lodge.

He has no close friends, no mistress, no ties of any kind. When he disappears he leaves no traces. An invisible thread links him to those whom he serves. On the soap box he seems like a man possessed, like a raving fanatic. On the steps of the Hotel Astor, where he stands every night for a few minutes, as though surveying the crowd, as though slightly abstracted, he is the picture of self-possession, of suave, cool nonchalance. He has had a bath and a rub-down, his nails manicured, his shoes shined; he has had a sound nap, too, and following that a most excellent meal in one of those quiet, exclusive restaurants which cater only to the gourmet. Often he takes a short stroll in the Park to digest the repast. He looks about with an intelligent, appreciative eye, aware of the beauties of earth and sky. Well read, travelled, with a taste for music and a passion for flowers, he often muses as he walks on the follies of man. He loves the flavour and savour of words; he rolls them over on his tongue, as he would a delicious morsel of food. He knows that he has the power to sway men, to stir their passions, to goad them and confound them at will. But this very ability has made him contemptuous, scornful and derisive of his fellow-man.

Now on the steps of the Astor, disguised as a boulevardier, a flaneur, a Bear Brummel, he gazes meditatively over the heads of the crowd, unperturbed by the chewing gum lights, the flesh for hire, the jingle of ghostly harnesses, the look of absentia-dementia in passing eyes. He has

detached himself from all parties, cults, isms, ideologies. He is a free-wheeling ego, immune to all faiths, beliefs, principles. He can buy whatever he needs to sustain the illusion that he needs nothing, no one. He seems this evening to be more than ever free, more than ever detached. He admits to himself that he feels like a character in a Russian novel and he wonders vaguely why he should be indulging in such sentiments. He recognises that he had just dismissed the idea of suicide; he is a little startled to find that he had been entertaining such ideas. He had been arguing with himself; it had been quite a prolonged affair, now that he retraces his thoughts. The most disturbing thought is that he does not recognise the self with which he had discussed the question of suicide. This hidden being had never made its wants known before. There had always been a vacuum around which he had built a veritable cathedral of changing personalities. When he retreated behind the facade he had always found himself alone. And now he had made the discovery that he was not alone, that despite all the changes of masks, all the architectural camouflage, some one was living with him, some one who knew him intimately, and who was now urging him to make an end of it.

The most fantastic part of it was that he was being urged to do it at once, to waste no time. It was preposterous because, admitting that the idea was seductive and appealing, he nevertheless felt the very human desire to enjoy the privilege of living out his own death in his imagination, at least for an hour or so. He seemed to be begging for time, which was strange, because never in his life had he entertained the notion of doing away with himself. He should have dismissed the thought instead of pleading like a convicted criminal for a few moments of grace. But this emptiness, this solitude into which he usually retreated, now began to assume the pressure and the explosiveness of a vacuum. The bubble was about to burst. He knew it. He knew he could do nothing to stay it. He walked rapidly down the steps of the Astor and plunged into the crowd. He thought for a moment that he would perhaps lose himself in the midst of all these bodies but no, he became more and more lucid, more and more self-conscious, more and more determined to obey the impervious voice which goaded him on. He was like a lover on his way to a rendezvous. He had only one thought—his own destruction. It burned like a fire, it illuminated the way.

As he turned down a side street in order to hasten to his appointment he understood very clearly that he had already been taken over, as it were, and that he had only to follow his nose. He had no problems, no conflicts. Certain automatic gestures he made without even slackening his pace. For instance, passing a garbage can he tossed his bank roll into it as though he were getting rid of a banana peel; at a corner he emptied the contents of his inside coat pocket down a sewer; his watch and chain, his ring, his pocket knife went in similar fashion. He patted himself all over, as he walked, to make sure that he had divested himself of all personal possessions. Even his handkerchief, after he had blown his nose for the last time, he threw in the gutter. He felt as light as a feather and moved with increasing celerity through the sombre streets. At a given moment the signal would be given and he would give himself up. Instead of a

tumultuous stream of thoughts, of last minute fears, wishes, hopes, regrets, such as we imagine to assail the doomed, he knew only a singular and ever more expansive void. His heart was like a clear blue sky in which not even the faintest trace of a cloud is perceptible. One might think that he had already crossed the frontier of the other world, that he was now before his actual bodily death already in the coma, and that emerging and finding himself on the other side he would be surprised to find himself walking so rapidly. Only then perhaps would he be able to collect his thoughts; only then would he be able to ask himself why he had done it.

Overhead the El is rattling and thundering. A man passes him running at top speed. Behind him is an officer of the law with a drawn revolver. He has begun to run too. Now all three of them are running. He doesn't know why, he doesn't even know that someone is behind him. But when the bullet pierces the back of his skull and he falls flat on his face a gleam of blinding clarity reverberates through his whole being.

Caught face downward in death there on the sidewalk, the grass already sprouting in his ears, Osmanli redescends the steps of the Hotel Astor, but instead of rejoining the crowd he slips through the back door of a modest little house in a village where he spoke a different language. He sits down at the kitchen table and sips a glass of buttermilk. It seems as though it were only yesterday that, seated at this same table, his wife had told him she was leaving him. The news had stunned him so that he had been unable to say a word; he had watched her go without making the slightest protest. He had been sitting there quietly drinking his buttermilk and she had told him with brutal, direct frankness that she never loved him. A few more words equally unsparing and she was gone. In those few minutes he had become a completely different man. Recovering from the shock he experienced the most amazing exhilaration. It was as if she had said to him: "You are now free to act!" He felt so mysteriously free that he wondered if his life up to that moment had not been a dream. To act! It was so simple. He remembered going out into the yard and seeing an axe, he had picked it up without thinking; and then, with the same spontaneity, he had walked to the dog kennel, whistled to the animal, and when it stuck its head out he had chopped it off clean. That's what it meant—to act! So extremely simple, it made him laugh. He knew now that he could do anything he wished. He went inside and called the maid. He wanted to take a look at her with these new eyes. There was nothing more in his mind than that. An hour later, having raped her, he went directly to the bank and from there to the railway station where he took the first train that came in.

From then on his life had assumed a kaleidoscopic pattern. The few murders he had committed were carried out almost absent-mindedly, and without malice, hatred or greed. He made love almost in the same way. He knew neither fear, timidity, nor caution.

In this manner ten years had passed in the space of a few minutes. The chains which bind the ordinary man had been taken from him; he had roamed the world at will, had tasted freedom and immunity, and then in a moment of utter relaxation, surrendering himself to the imagination, had concluded with pitiless logic that death was the one luxury he had

denied himself. And so he had descended the steps of the Hotel Astor and a few minutes later, falling face downward in death, he realised that he was not mistaken when he understood her to say that she had never loved him. It was the first time he had ever thought of it again, and though it would be the last time he would ever think of it he could not make any more of it than when he first heard it ten years ago. It had not made sense then and it did not make sense now. He was still sipping his buttermilk. He was already a dead man. He was powerless, that's why he had felt so free. But he had never actually been free, as he had imagined himself to be. That had been simply an hallucination. To begin with, he had never chopped the dog's head off, otherwise it would not now be barking with joy. If he could only get to his feet and look with his own eyes he would know for certain whether everything had been real or hallucinatory. But the power to move has been taken from him. From the moment she had uttered those few telling words he knew he would never be able to move from the spot. Why she had chosen that particular moment when he was drinking the buttermilk, why she had waited so long to tell him, he could not understand and never would. He would not even try to understand. He had heard her very distinctly, quite as if she had put her lips to his ear and shouted the words into it. It had travelled with such speed to all parts of his body that it was as though a bullet had exploded in his brain. Then, could it have been just a few moments later or an eternity, he had emerged from the prison of his old self much as a butterfly emerges from its chrysalis. Then the dog, then the maid, then this, then that—innumerable incidents repeating themselves as if in accordance with a pre-established plan. Everything of a pattern, even down to the three or four casual murders.

As in the legends where it is told that he who forsakes his vision tumbles into a labyrinth from which there is no issue save death, where through symbol and allegory it is made clear that the coils of the brain, the coils of the labyrinth, the coils of the serpents which entwine the backbone are one and the same strangling process, the process of shutting doors behind one, of walling in the flesh, of moving relentlessly towards petrification so it was with Osmanli, an obscure Turk, caught by the imagination on the steps of the Hotel Astor in the moment of his most illusory freedom and detachment. Looking over the heads of the crowd he had perceived with shuddering remembrance the image of his beloved wife, her dog-like head turned to stone. The pathetic desire to overreach his sorrow had ended in the confrontation with the mask. The monstrous embryo of unfulfilment blocked every egress. With face pressed against the pavement he seemed to kiss the stony features of the women he had lost. His flight, pursued with skilful indirection, had brought him face to face with the bright image of horror reflected in the shield of self-protection. Himself slain, he had slain the world. He had reached his own identity in death.

(This is a fragment of a section of The Rosy Crucifixion. We should have liked to publish the whole section as it was submitted to us, but unfortunately it was much too long for publication under the present circumstances of scanty paper supplies and infrequent appearance).

Poems

EARTH AND EDEN.

Where time and memory intersect the sun
seeds of the wise tree grow about our roots;
where space and conquest spread upon the earth
our wisdom is undone.

Within us thoughts like wild years unwind,
emotion moves upon us like a storm,
desire waxes like forest fire, and quietly
consuming dark spreads stealthily the sky.

These intersections are remoter patterns
than pain familiar to the pleading flesh.
World of abstractions grown immaculate
recedes far from the hand of hate,
the loins of love.

Lying together, man and woman lie
far as the separated islands of the sea,
shoulder to shoulder as the comrades stand
there is an abyss of divided lands.
We are disorder, all our fretful nerves
cry of division like the separate stars,
friend and our enemy, stranger and brother,
heart of our loving knows no unity with mind.
Where is the synthesis?

There is a tragedy of simple hearts
who go believing to appointed death;
there is disaster of the wise,
belief and unbelief war in their minds—
but no firm order of the rising sun,
phases inevitable, like the growing moon,
four natural seasons of the patient earth;
one is a multitude given to strife.
In root there lies the pattern of the flower.
We seek our purpose who have sprung from seed
and make death like a carnival
of lost and wayward purposes.
Progressively confusion we achieve
who would impose the power of our will.
These are the agonies we lay upon ourselves—

the final pain, the dazed and unconsidered sorrow,
death, love's negation.
And so, bewildered, do we beg our prayers.

Where time and memory intersect the sun
there is our happiness, there
in the still and burning centre
is the synthesis.

EMANUEL LITVINOFF.

TWO POEMS

I

what if a much of a which of a wind
gives the truth to summer's lie;
bloodies with dizzying leaves the sun
and yanks immortal stars awry?
Blow king to beggar and queen to seem
(blow friend to fiend: blow space to time)
—when skies are hanged and oceans drowned,
the single secret will still be man

what if a keen of a lean wind flays
screaming hills with sleet and snow:
strangles valleys by ropes of thing
and stifles forests in white ago?
Blow hope to terror; blow seeing to blind
(blow pity to envy and soul to mind)
whose hearts are mountains, roots are trees,
it's they shall cry hello to the spring

What if a dawn of a doom of a dream
bites this universe in two,
peels forever out of his grave
and sprinkles nowhere with me and you?
Blow soon to never and never to twice
(blow like to isn't: blow death to was)
all nothing's only our hugest home;
the most who die, the more we live

II

no man, if men are gods; but if gods must
be men, the sometimes only man is this
(most common, for each anguish is his grief;
and, for his joy is more than joy, most rare)

a fiend, if fiends speak truth; if angels burn

by their own generous completely light,
an angel; or (as various worlds he'll spurn
rather than fail immeasurable fate)
coward, clown, traitor, idiot, dreamer, beast—

such was a poet and shall be and is

who'll solve the depths of horror to defend
a sunbeam's architecture with his life:
and carve immortal jungles of despair
to hold a mountain's heartbeat in his hand

E. E. CUMMINGS.

VOYAGE A MOURIR

Six bœufs ont égorgé un bœuf
quand du pareil à la pareille
étaient felées les portes closes.

Six bœufs ont égorgé
l'églantier—En mangeant tous en rond
gros et des couteaux un roi nègre au fond
était le seul à ne pas toujours manger.

Car on mangeait. Le bateau comme un amandier
ayant écouté l'entrepont de soldats d'étoile
purs de chansons du nord de tomber de dormir
les avait laissés aux portes
les plus trouées du monde
moi je ne sais pas entrer.

Je ne sais pas entrer avec les foules de carbonisés
de noyés d'yeux perdus d'avance
le hurlement seul a le devoir d'entrer
tous les arbres à fleurs sont retranchés du monde
et sont plantés les généraux verticaux
les galons horizontaux les sens les flèches de la vie
au mot d'ordre.

Je ne dirai pas ce que j'ai vu
les yeux tomberaient sous les feuilles.
Il n'y a plus un fil d'amour qui tienne
d'un amandier à l'autre les charmeurs de l'aurore
le petit peuple païen qui se caresse.

Il n'y a plus paquet de lune renversée
que la force dans l'entrepont
qui coule comme un sang versé
et des hommes qui regardent
qui en discutent qui en mangent

Six bœufs ont égorgé un bœuf.

VALENTINE PENROSE.

Ajaccio 18 Janvier 44

THE GREEN MOAT OF TIME.

Time, a green moat around the castled mind,
Holds corpses in its depth, that rise and sink
On tides of thought, stirred by the blind
Currents among the weeded shadows of the brink.

Bound hand and foot, their bloated bodies float
Sometimes under battlements where the watcher stands;
Their eyes are eaten by fishes, their grey cheeks wet
With slime where their hair creeps in weedy strands.

Yet in those dead features the watcher sees
A moment live across the wasted faces,
Where the lips become red and vanished eyeballs rise
And the swollen tongue speaks thickly and accuses.

And as such bodied memories sink and fade,
Leaving their ripples on the closing slime,
The watcher turns within the walls, to hide
His dread of failure and his fear of time.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

THE MAN.

Seven pounds ten and threepence farthing
Was invested, and I saw
The new man stroll
And bring the Princess to the party.
With mine own eyes did I see it.
Afterwards I realised
That through me had passed
The torturous mystic chamber seven times
But pounds ten and threepence farthing.

COLIN ROBINSON.

Denis Preston and
Albert McCarthy

The Poetry of American Negro Folksong

(1) *The Impact of Christianity*

"The African," wrote Oluwole Ayodele Alakija, "just danced his way into Christianity" . . .

And the AfroAmerican, dispossessed descendant of the continually transplanted African, might well be said to have sung his way to the salvation alleged by Christian doctrine; his baptism—degradation, suffering, humiliation.

The Christianisation of the American Negro slave was at once a courtesy gesture, to God and conscience (a gesture by the slave-owners to soothe the irk of a sickly Western conscience), and an economic provision. A proviso against revolt, a guarantee of unswerving service. Hell-fire and eternal damnation were to be to the Negro mind what the rawhide and the stocks were to the Negro body.

Divorced from the binding ethics of his primitive community culture Christianity brought to the Negro a new code of social conduct, a centrepost—a vision. Gone were all the ancient tenets, the group conscience, the community conscience, the totem, taboo, the ceremony of living, and the creative energy nurtured by devotion to the rite. The integrity of his African being had been shattered by the indignity of slavery. To the wounded conscience of these peoples Christianity brought again a sense of oneness with being.

With vile hypocrisy the slave-holders employed religion as a tool of repression. A black-Christian paragon was created, humble before a white god, servile to a white master—Uncle Tom, whose reward was the heavenly hereafter. Christianity was the sponsor of the Uncle Tom Negro, that parasitic instrument of the white *herrenvolk*, castigated by the contemporary AfroAmerican poet, Langston Hughes . . . ¹

Voices crying in the wilderness
At so much per word
From the white folks:

"Be meek and humble,
All you niggers,
And do not cry
Too loud."

Uncle Tom served his turn, and he still finds his uses. Were American Negro society, however, composed only of such "paragons" the vibrant body of AfroAmerican folkart would never have matured. AfroAmerican folksong, which is the body positive of this art, is a compound of songs

¹ "To Certain Negro Leaders".

and verses born of repression, envy, frustration, folly. And, to a degree, revolt.

Watts's hymnal has contributed less to the store of American Negro folksong than the levee, the whore-house, the chain-gang.

Nonetheless, the practice of Christianity brought, in great measure, to the mass of Negro people a consciousness of the poetic use of the tongue which slavery had made common to all these hybrid descendants of Afric stock. Moreover, its adoption by the Negro served, to a point, to confute the machinations of the *herrenvolk*, since it welded into a single directive force the heterogeneous emotions which the state of slavery had inverted and repressed. It brought about a resurgence of creative energy within the community, a will and a *need* to create a ritualistic crucible into which could be poured the creative passion of a cataleptic primitivism.

An instinctive pantheism prompted the Negro to identify the deity with the tools of his work, the necessities of his being, the manifestations of nature.

My Lord calls me,
He calls me by the thunder. . . .

he sings. And heaven became a co-existent fourth-dimensional plane. The conception of "De Lawd" in Marc Connelly's *Green Pastures* is scarcely removed from fact.

★ ★ ★ ★

Christianity came to the Negro primarily through the teachings of the Methodist missionaries, those itinerant preachers who followed hot on the heels of the pioneers of the new continent proclaiming their gospel of hell-fire and salvation.

The camp meeting, which still finds favour amongst communities of "backwoods" Negroes, is reminiscent of the great meets organised by the Methodists and Baptists, where the faithful were gathered together, the sinners purged of their sins, and fresh converts herded into the holy fold for redemption! These camp meetings, with their praying and singing and testifying, would continue till, whipped to religious frenzy by the exhortations of the preacher, exaltation overflowed in an ecstasy of shouting, screaming, dancing.

The Negro preacher, though often only semi-literate, had to possess histrionic powers in order to impress this fiery gospel upon his own simple and ignorant people. And these powers he would exert to the utmost to sway his credulous congregation, hungry enough to respond to any call which evoked their stifled yearning for communal expression. Within the pursuance of the rite they discovered a new order of social kinship, a common ground for emotional fraternisation.

The coloured preacher was more than a mere minister of religion. In the words of W. E. B. Du Bois he was "the healer of the sick, the interpreter of the unknown, the comforter of the sorrowing, the supernatural avenger of wrongs". In fact, the direct historical descendant of the African witch-doctor.

And the emotions he fired in his congregation were not wholly Christian, either. They were sprung of a deep dormant well of primitive consciousness. Zora Hurston, the AfroAmerican authoress, writes as

follows of the religious manifestation, "shouting":

"There can be little doubt that shouting is a survival of the African 'possession' by the gods. In Africa it is sacred to the priesthood or acolytes, in America it has become generalised. The implication is the same, however. It is a sign of special favour from the spirit that he chooses to drive out the individual consciousness temporarily and use the body for its expression."²

★ ★ ★ ★

His African heritage has endowed the American Negro with an instinctive feeling for rhythmic pattern. His intense rhythmic conception of the dance finds effete counterpart in much of modern western dance—well known enough, and enough abused. This same Afric legacy has imbued his practice of Christian rites with such dynamic force.

The oratory of the sermon is itself incarnate with rhythmic nuance. Every device is coined in order to sustain and emphasise rhythmic tension. A widely practiced emotional adjunct is the employment of *breathing* as a metric symbol, the breath being suddenly and ferociously ejected—*ha!*³

★ ★ ★ ★

A method, common to both white and Negro preachers, of teaching the songs of the service to the poor and generally illiterate "backwoods" congregations was to outline appropriate phrases from bible or hymnal which the congregation would be given to repeat in singsong manner. Whilst the poetic development of the theme depended entirely upon the imagination and inventive powers of the minister, communal harmony was at once created by the close interplay of solo voice and chorus, whose constantly reiterated line, a violent *ostinato*, served to anchor formal design.

Tell-a me who dat had rod?
Mone, member, mone!
Hit was Moses, chil' of God.
Mone, member, mone!
Who dat hit dat mighty rock?
Mone, member, mone!
Moses strike one, heaven clock,
Mone, member, mone!
Struck it one an' struck it two,
Mone, member, mone!
Watch out, Moses, what you do!
Mone, member, mone!
Struck it three times, ring-a-ding.
Mone, member, mone!
Watch dem healin' waters spring.
Mone, member, mone!
Come ye now and quench yo' thirst.
Mone, member, mone!
Yes, de preacher an' de elder first.
Mone, member, mone! . . . ⁵

² From "Negro"—Nancy Cunard (1934).

³ The use of this expressive device is also to be found in AfroAmerican worksongs. The worksong, however, reserves this ejection of breath for the climacteric action of the task, the hammer blow, the stroke of the pick, etc.

"There is a decided syncopation of speech—the crowding in of many syllables or the lengthening out of a few to fill one metrical foot . . . The rhythmical stress of this syncopation is partly obtained by a marked silent fraction of a beat, often this silent fraction is filled up by a hand-clap" . . . ⁴

⁴ "God's Trombones"—James Weldon Johnson (1927).

⁵ From "American Ballads & Folksongs"—J.A. & A. Lomax (1934).

This obstinate repetition can be discovered in almost all Negro spirituals, the rhythmic response couched in the simplest words which enabled even the most backward communities to participate actively in the performance of the rite.

It is interesting to notice how instinctively, it seems, the Negro turned to the open vowels, sounds which best reflect the characteristic *timbre* of his voice.

The sedate concert-room rendering of Negro "songs of the spirit" by the Robesons and Andersons, whilst designed to appeal to the polite tastes of western audiences, bear small relation to the rough and elemental singing of the untutored chorus singers of the provincial Negro communities widespread throughout the U.S.A. The poetic substance of these songs, however, whether sung by Negro stars or the humblest choir in some southern chapel, is generally identical. The verses derive, first, from the bible stories of Hebrew heroes and prophets (so closely identified by the repressed black with his own hopes and aspirations) and second, from conventional non-conformist hymn-book sources.

About many of these songs of *hymn-book* origin, with their trite and sanctimonious verses, there is an atmosphere reminiscent of the Salvationist street-corner meeting. . . .

Don't you want to be a soldier?
Don't you want to be a soldier?
Don't you want to be a soldier
For the year of Jubilee? . . .

and so on. On the other hand, in the twenty-five verses of "Go down, Moses" there is something of the dramatic content of a Border ballad. Seldom has antiphony resulted in finer effect—the interplay between the reiterated "*Let my people go!*" and the slow surge of the theme's unfolding achieves a rare tension.⁶

In the singing of his sacred songs the Negro shews little of the resignation to his earthly lot which the tenor of the verses would suggest. Instead, there is a sweeping eagerness, a ring of triumph almost, as though in singing he is in the very presence of the deity, on the threshold of a world which is, already, emotionally his. It is just this primitive *awareness* that has made Christianity so personal a facet of the Negro's community being. Even in his address to his God he does not adopt a special tongue, a spurious cleric jargon completely unrelated to his workaday speech. Often enough the verses of his religious songs stem straight from his personal idiom. . . .

Keep a-inching along,
Keep a-inching along;
Jesus will come by'nd-bye.
Keep a-inching along like a po' inch-worm,
Jesus will come by'an-bye . . .

Sometimes the verses cast reflection on his social condition, and then the medium of the sacred song becomes a channel for the expression of

⁶ Harriet Tubman (1820-1913) a famous Negro "conductor" on the great Underground Railway whence escaped slaves were assisted to cross to the northern states bore the pseudonym "Moses" on account of her gift of leadership. The song, "Go down, Moses" was employed as a code-warning of imminent danger.

revolutionary sentiments. . . . ⁷

No more peck o' corn for me,
Many t'ousand go.

No more driver's lash for me
Many t'ousand go.

No more pint o' salt for me,
Many t'ousand go.

No more hundred lash for me,
Many t'ousand go. . . .

★ ★ ★ ★

The old-time Negro preacher is rapidly dying out. His contribution to the AfroAmerican folkstore was, in its way, immense. Although often caricatured and sometimes mocked he was, in reality, a lively force in the Negro community, and precursor of much which is worthy within the body of AfroAmerican folk culture.

James Weldon Johnson, who tried to capture something of the *geist* of the Negro sermon in "God's Trombones" (his collection of sermons-in-verse) recalls, in the introduction to this book, the vital qualities of these men, the preachers.

"The Negro preacher" . . . he wrote, "knew the secret of oratory, that at bottom it is a progression of rhythmic words more than it is anything else. Indeed, I have witnessed congregations moved to ecstasy by the rhythmic intoning of sheer incoherencies. He was a master of all the modes of eloquence. He often possessed a voice that was a marvellous instrument, a voice he could modulate from a sepulchral whisper to a crashing thunder-clap. His discourse was generally kept at a high pitch of fervency, but occasionally he dropped into colloquialisms and, less often, into humour. He preached a personal and anthropomorphic God, a sure-enough heaven and a red-hot hell". . . .

A comparison at this point is not without interest. On the one hand the cultured pen of the AfroAmerican poet. . . . ⁸

And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world.

And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said: "That's good!

On the other, the sermon as heard by Zora Hurston. The Negro in

⁷ "A song to which the rebellion has actually given rise. This was composed by nobody knows whom . . . and has been sung in secret . . . The peck of corn and the pint of salt were slavery rations."—*Slave Songs of the United States*. (New York: Peter Smith).

⁸ The line arrangement indicates, as far as possible, the tempi of the preacher.

his church. . . .⁹

When God
Stood out on the apex of His power
Before the hammers of creation
Fell upon the anvils of Time and hammered out the ribs of the earth
Before He made ropes
By the breath of fire
And set the boundaries of the ocean by gravity of His power
When God said, ha!
Let us make man
And the elders upon the altar cried, ha!
If you make man, ha!
He will sin.
God my master, ha!
Christ yo' friend said
Father!! Ha-aa!
I am the teeth of Time
That comprehended de dust of de earth
And weighed de hills in scales
Painted de rainbow dat marks de end of de departing store
Measured de seas in de holler of my hand
Held de elements in an unbroken chain of controllment.
Make man, ha!
If he sin, I will redeem him
I'll break de chasm of hell
Where de fire's never quenched
I'll go into de grave
Where de worm never dies, Ah!
So God A'mighty, ha!
Got his stuff together. . . .

Here's no sanctimonious parson with mumbling self-conscious congregation. Here's no *Christian* rite. Rather, here in the AfroAmerican church, lies the primary realisation of a frustrated communal passion.

The interdependence of prayer-leader and congregation is, at all times, manifest. As the rhythmic incantation of the chorus urges the soloist's inspiration to greater improvisatory heights, so does his poetic oratory exhort the zeal of the chorus. . . . The impetus of all AfroAmerican folkart is the consciousness of this essential rhythmic current.

⁹ From "Negro"—Nancy Cunard (1934).

(This is the first of a series of three articles on Negro Poetry. The remaining two, on Work Songs and The Blues respectively, will be published in the next two consecutive volumes of "NOW").

Marja Kuncewicz

The Home

(A vision of the fin de siècle to come.)

They passed a group of birches, crossed a lawn sprinkled with dandelions, and sat down on a bench at the edge of a ravine. On the farther side of the ravine stood a house. The two women often walked here to sit together in the early evening, after Priscilla discovered that Wanda knew the secrets of the House. For a month past Priscilla had been instructress to one of the groups of the educational settlement in the little European town of Kazimierz on the Vistula. She was young, had an inquisitive turn of mind, and had had a university education. She read a great deal. She was greatly intrigued when, in old novels, she found strong indications of the power of something which the British classics referred to as the Home, "sweet home". It was clear that this thing, which by no means always seemed to justify the adjective 'sweet', was closely connected with houses. On previous transvolitations Priscilla had occasionally come across Ancient Monuments known as churches, and in almost every colony there was one, frequently two or three Houses, which people visited in order to get some idea of human existence before World War No. 3. Yet neither personal examination of the pre-global era interiors, nor the global lectures on pre-global history threw any light on the real significance of the thing which Europeans of the Epoch of Scanty Communications had called home. But when Priscilla flew from Hongkong to Kazimierz, she soon found out that Wanda, who had the next compartment to hers in underground shelter No. 160, was an old woman. A woman who formerly had spent many years living in the House. And, in fact, in that very Kazimierz House, which stood so aggressively at the top of the green slope opposite, as a survival from the Epoch.

After three World Wars old Europeans, especially inhabitants of the Continent, were a rarity in the Republic of the Globe. In any case, old age was not an easy thing to recognise, now its external symptoms had been eliminated. Yet Priscilla soon realised that Wanda was an unusual person. For instance, she had a number of personal effects. She went to the bath with a towel over her arm and only used that one towel, taking it back to her compartment afterwards. It was of linen, with red and black embroidery and the letter 'W' at one end, and was quite unlike the global towels. She always used the same spoon to mix her revitalising fluids in a glass, taking out of her handbag the spoon, which was made not of plastics but of silver. Above her bed she had pasted the photographs of very strange-looking persons, some very short, others very tall, but all with tense expressions on their faces, like the actors in pre-global films. And the men were dressed differently from the women. Wanda used to say that these people were her 'family', a remark which sounded very strange to Priscilla. Until at last she found out that when there were concerts or dances in the Rose-Globalite Hall Wanda would go to her compartment and kneel down before an image of the cross on which the pre-global

madman known as the God-Man had suffered death. Then Priscilla realised that Wanda was an old woman from the Continent of Europe.

This discovery greatly excited her. For a long time she had been wanting to meet someone really old, but especially a Continental European. They were the only people who would be able to explain the elusive secrets of houses to her. She was not very keen on her work as school instructor, which she would have to perform during three transvolitations, of which this was the first, nor the supplementary occupation as instructor which was assigned to her on her labour card. All this work was alike, it was nothing more than a supervisory function. She regarded it as a survival of the past. For what instruction could she give to children in schools, to actors in the film studios, readers in the libraries, when everywhere every activity had its prescribed, detailed rules and regulations. These regulations came in an uninterrupted flow from the radio and television sets, from the leaflets to be read and leaflets to be listened to, from illuminated and ordinary public announcements, from one's pocket, from under one's pillow, from the trees. Practical knowledge was, so to speak, atomised into the terrestrial atmosphere; one absorbed it unconsciously at each moment of existence.

Priscilla was rather more proud of her reserve profession of Textual Commentator. As a woman born in England during the Epoch of Scanty Communications, when the World Republic came into being she had been assigned to the Reserve Cadres of the European Mind. She had been taught three other dead languages, and so she knew English, French, German, and Italian. She knew, too, the classic fiction in these languages as well as the basic concepts and customs of the pre-global peoples. The opportunity of pursuing classical studies was one of the numerous pleasures of global culture; they provided a 'pure' subject quite divorced from everyday needs, one of the luxuries which the One Indivisible First and Last Republic of the Globe could afford its people.

Yet it annoyed Priscilla to find that neither in the educational settlements nor in the film studios, nor in the libraries, nor even in the Eros-Clubs, which were so boring, did anyone ever want to benefit from her reserve knowledge. Absolutely no one seemed to know that such a person as Antoinette Buddenbrook had ever existed, or Mrs. Dalloway, though Priscilla regarded them as persons more interesting than the members of the Global Council. Nor was anyone interested in, for instance, the great house at Manderley, where there had been the mysterious fire which so afflicted the mysterious de Winters. Priscilla realised that the majority of her partners and pupils, most of whom were yellow of skin, or frequently black, could not attach any importance to the pre-global Germans, English, or to their dwellings. But whites—Scots in particular—were still to be found in almost all the global centres. Yet even they never asked the kind of question which she sought to provoke by displaying her badge of Textual Commentator.

Priscilla's useless, unaided knowledge seemed to disturb her brain violently. The less hope the Textual Commentator had that anyone would ask her about burnt down palaces, the more she herself desired to ask someone the real meaning of a day in those pre-historic pre-global times, a day in the life of Mrs. Dalloway, all of whose minutes were focussed in

the direction of one single hearth. A day which passed along the streets and through the clouds that its reflexes might light up the home. Just the home. The place which one left only for a short time, to which one returned at all hours for a long time. The place where there was hardly anyone, yet objects seemed to speak, and the air vibrated like a harp.

Standing before Wanda, Priscilla—unquestioned—*could* at last question.

Her first question was:

"How long have you been in Kazimierz and what is your function here?"

"How long"? Wanda repeated with the same exaggerated grimace as that of the people in her photographs. A grimace which undoubtedly expressed what the French classics called *rêverie*. "I've been here a very long time. I was born here before World War No. 1. In that war children weren't yet expelled from their homes, so I lived here right through it. Also the entr'acte between Wars No. 1 and No. 2. War No. 2 drove me out of my home and my country. I became what was known as a refugee. After War No. 2 the British Isles, where I found shelter, joined the Eurasian Union of Soviets. As I had no faith in the Eurasian Union I took shelter in America. The foundation of the Global Republic came while I was there, living in my own beautiful villa. For, as you no doubt know, in the entr'acte between Wars No. 2 and No. 3 total destitution existed only in Eurasia. On the other hand, in America production for internal consumption flourished, and we all had our own lovely villas. It was only the air war No. 3 which destroyed the houses in all the continents. But when the Global Republic was founded I was not yet entitled to apply for domiciliary rights. As of course you know, all the refugees were assigned by the Global Council to work as instructors in travelling. So for four years, or as you call it Transvolitations, I worked as an instructor in various of the courses and camps of the world. My time for permanent domicile came at last two years ago and I chose Kazimierz, returning here. Yet in reality I have the feeling that I have always been here in my house on the hill."

This very long monologue, full of archaic words, and expressing obscure ideas, dared Priscilla. She did not know how to put the next question, so she clung to the question she had already put into words.

"What is your function here?" she asked a second time. And for a second time Wanda smiled with an expression which beyond all doubt implied *rêverie*.

"What my function is? What it used to be. I am arranging flowers."

Three weeks had passed since that first conversation. Now Priscilla and Wanda were sitting in front of the house, at dusk.

"Certainly, let us assume," said Priscilla, "let us assume that our sleeping in underground shelters is the result of a psychic complex after three wars in the air. Global security exists only since the last fourteen transvolitations. I myself have never lost my childish fear of the sky, my dislike of the sun and the moon, of windows, of places not covered by the globalite vaulting. I understand that before the total wars people did not have these complexes. But that does not explain the institution of the home. If I have understood the old books aright, home—especially where women were concerned—was not merely a question of spending the

night. It also involved some endless business during the daytime. Something which lasted all through life. Or rather, possibly for whole generations. . . . What are we to make of that?"

"How can I explain it to you?" Wanda sighed. "First of all you must recall that the prohibition of settling down also has existed only for a short time. Formerly not only old people, but everybody was entitled to live permanently in some one country. Don't you remember the word *motherland*? It was one of the most resounding words in our vocabulary."

"Yes, I remember it. When I was small, during World War No. 2, people called refugees often spent the night in the London underground shelter to which my *mother* took me. We still had *mothers* then, and the *refugees* often talked to my *mother*! They would frown as though they had something in their eye, and shout out that word. And my *mother* would nod and say: 'I understand. You mean you miss your country'. I know it. The French classics called it *la patrie*.

"That's right. One lived in a *patrie* for ever. From father to son. From grandfathers to grandsons. And if you had to leave it to go somewhere else you had homesickness. Do you understand? *Sehnsucht*. *Cafard*."

"No, I don't understand. But where did you old Europeans really spend your infinitely monotonous, prevolitation time: in your homes or in your countries?"

"In our homes. But you couldn't have homes without countries. *Home* meant the home you had in your country."

"That's much too difficult for me to understand."

"Wait . . . Nowadays, until they grow old everybody has to shift from one area to another every twelve months. The principle of the Global system is that 'everybody is everywhere'. 'Everybody has everything'. Formerly that wasn't so. Formerly people didn't like to be everywhere. They liked just the spot. Frequently just one town, or village. Or even one street. And they didn't like everything. They liked just their own things."

"Say it in the global language."

"Ah, I'm ashamed . . . I haven't properly mastered the global language yet."

"Truly; your accent is bad. But that is permissible in old people from the Continent."

"I wasn't thinking of my accent, but simply that my thoughts do not fit into global words. I shall never be able to explain things to you. So I'll try to picture them for you. What would you like me to tell you about home?"

Priscilla bowed her head in thought. Then, chewing a blade of grass, after a moment or two she began:

"At the very beginning of the story *Buddenbrooks* there is the following scene: an old woman, strangely dressed, with her hair all untidy, is running along the street of a town. She is met by an old man, who is called a pastor, and who asks: 'What's the matter?' And she answers: 'I'm going to drown myself in the river, because men from another country have entered my home and want to take away my silver spoons'. Then the man called a pastor does not allow the old woman to run to the river, but goes

with her to her home and explains to the men from the other country that the silver spoons ought to remain in the drawer. And you know, that scene torments me even in my dreams. Once, in the underground shelter, when I was small, while men from another country were dropping bombs on London my *mother's* suitcase opened. . . . A spoon fell out of it. *Mother* pressed that spoon to her breast and said: 'that's all that's left of my home.' And there were tears in her eyes. Wanda! You too carry your own spoons about in your bag. But look: your home still stands. Men from another country haven't destroyed it. Would you like to live in it again, with your spoon? "

There was a silence. A very crimson moon climbed up from behind the birches, and the glass glistened in the great doors leading on to the terrace of the house. It was quiet and warm; evening scents wandered in gusts through the air: sometimes the scent of stock, sometimes of tobacco-plant, or of lily. A peacock stood on an oaken stump and flapped its wings towards the sunset, momentarily emitting a great cry, emphatic and wild. When that cry flew through the silence towards the river Vistula, the bird's wings stiffened, and it stretched out its neck after the cry, which grew milder as it faded into the distance. From the birch wood at the foot of the slope a nightingale called. The peacock dropped heavily from the stump and flew off to the roof. But the nightingale sang on, intently, fervently, as though both the sun and the moon existed in its heart.

Wanda let her head fall back on the bench. Between her sorrowful lips the white teeth glistened like those of a young woman.

'No,' she answered at last. 'What do I want a home for, when there is the world? No. I would never want to live in a house again. I haven't got the strength for that. Do you know what I used to do at this time of the day when I was living in that house? I would stand on the terrace, gazing in the direction of the garden wicket gate, and tremble. Would he return? My handsome, dark-eyed husband, who had sworn that he would spend all the summer nights of his life with me? When he did return, he was not always smiling. Then I would tremble again, thinking I had lost his love. That his thoughts and feelings no longer dwelt in our home. That they had remained with another woman, or with some matter more important than me and the home. When he did come we ate our supper together, there, behind that window, which in those days was ruddy with the gleam of the fire. On the table were lighted candles in a great brass candlestick, and the food did not arrive when we pressed a button, but was brought in on a copper tray by the maid Natalia, who came in on tip-toe, and was sorrowful because her own young husband, who was waiting in the garden, did not have a home where they could lie down and sleep. Then we would read books, which was a universal habit, or we talked, which also was a habit among continental couples. But the reading, and the talking and listening to music, every homely occupation flowed so to speak on the surface of a black, tempestuous torrent. We often broke off to listen: perhaps one of the children sleeping upstairs was crying out in his sleep, or coughing? We were terribly afraid of losing our children. The dog would growl, or prick up one ear. . . . And then we listened in case a thief was creeping up through the vegetable garden, or was letting himself down into the cellar. 'Is the yard door locked?' I would ask my husband.

Have you barred the garage doors? It's possible to get through from there on to the stairs.' 'Do you always keep your jewellery in the house?' my husband would ask, with knitted brows. 'You must take it to the bank. Burglaries are getting alarmingly common.' Sometimes the thread of the wireless music would snap. Then for a moment we grew anxious: perhaps men from another country had just forced their way through the frontiers of our country and our sky? In a matter of moments the interruption was simply explained. Yet even then we were not at ease. In our fear of a storm we started up and ran to close the windows, to switch off the electricity, to make sure the fire extinguishers were in their place. At last, very tired, we went to bed. But don't think that sleep brought any relief. Or that love brought any relief. Often I would dream that the house was on fire; I was just as terrified of lightning as of bombs. I dreamed of dangerous people; poor, helpless people who, like Natalia, never had a home of their own and who cast envious eyes on our home. Or of people who breathed into my children's mouths with breath laden with germs. And most of all, the nightmare of nightmares: women. Strange women in gowns that fitted them far more perfectly than mine fitted me, with faces that smiled far more charmingly, more sweetly, than my face,—women who had been born several years later than I and so would keep my husband from returning one evening. I woke up; he, too, groaned in his sleep, we linked arms, we pressed lips to lips, and our love seemed delirious. And it was delirious: with fear and despair."

Wanda became silent. Flooded with moonlight, her face with its shut eyes looked like a closed shell. The nightingale was still singing. Priscilla stirred.

"Yet you have kept your spoon and towel," she whispered. "You have retained them in memory of that home where you feared or despaired."

Wanda passed her palm over her forehead, and gazed at the house.

"Yes," she sighed, "I brought them away very many years ago, from there" . . . she stretched out her hand. "The dining room was on the left beyond those glass doors. And our bedroom was upstairs on the right. Bombs fell on the neighbouring houses, I took the towel from upstairs, the spoon from downstairs, and went out. Afterwards I realised that I had left my home for ever."

"But didn't you just say: 'I have the feeling that I have always been here, in my house on the hill?'"

Wanda turned her head away.

"Certainly, I did say that . . . And it is true. Never could I forget that perhaps my house still stood somewhere in the world. Never could I cease to fear for that home and for all that had once belonged to it. That was a very unpleasant feeling. . . . But as time went on my people were lost to me. Whether they died, or whether they're still alive . . . I don't know. Many years, first of total murders and deportations, then of Ideal Communications and Global Freedom destroyed all the ordered lists in the address books. But as it is the established order of things that anyone may be commanded to disappear at any moment and not return, there is no reason to be anxious for the absent ones. So I have long since ceased to be anxious for my husband, who once was so young, handsome, dark-eyed. . . . And for my children, who . . . if they're still alive . . .

are not anxious for their children. Least of all am I anxious for my grandchildren, whom I have never seen, and who certainly do not know the meaning of the word 'granny'. Yet I could never forego anxiety. I felt that if I should cease to fear completely I would petrify, I would fall asleep for ever. So I kept the spoon and the towel. Sometimes during the day I am seized with fear lest I have lost them; at night I wake up and feel under the pillow to make sure they're there. And then my heart beats strongly again. . . ."

Priscilla shrugged her shoulders. Gazing at the house, she interrupted:

"Why have you come back here to sit gazing at your house? It's always possible that the roof may be struck by lightning. Do you want your heart to beat even more violently?"

Wanda rose from the bench. Her face, her neck, so smooth despite her age, were suddenly covered with wrinkles, like stirred water. Doubtless Antoinette Buddenbrook looked like that as she ran to drown herself in the river.

"Ah, don't torture me!" she cried. "You're behaving like the worst type of thief in pre-global days: you want to steal a secret!"

But Priscilla was not a nervous, pre-global girl. She had an inquisitive mind and a beloved profession: Textual Commentator. She might never have the chance of another talk with Wanda. And in all the course of her volitations she might never fall in with another former inhabitant of a former house.

"Don't go away!" she held the pre-global woman by the hand. "What you said is important not only to you and me. Don't you think you have even less right to your secrets than to your spoons?"

Wanda sat down. The wrinkles dispersed. She again closed her eyes.

"No, I don't think so. But ask your questions, by all means. Only you must understand that it isn't possible to answer all questions in words. And not every question can be formulated in words. Not only that: but there are glances to which you will find no answers in any living eyes."

"It would be better if you talked in global fashion," Priscilla protested. "I realise that you're tired. Have a rest before I ask another question. And meantime, let me explain myself to you. Don't think—don't think that I have perfect wellbeing. The unpleasant feeling which I frequently experience is probably very similar to what the classics call *Sehnsucht*, *nostalgia*, or maybe *cafard*. I don't know. Obviously that feeling has nothing to do with what you call *country*, for all I remember of England is of very uncomfortable shelters, where there were trains and rats as well as children. Nor has it anything to do with any person. For *mother* disappeared with her suitcase so long ago. And later on nobody stayed with me for longer than one volitation. And their stays were never marked by the emotions you have mentioned: that common fear of thieves, that common despair because of sickness and age. But . . . ah, Wanda, truly the global language is not so expressive. Now I find it difficult to explain myself to you." She paused. "Wait . . . I'll tell you my story. Well, once . . . It was at Cressy. I was still undergoing training. On my

way to the club I noticed a certain young tree. It was springtime. The tree was blossoming beautifully and had a very pleasant scent. I had to pass it six times every day. I always took a good look at it. Then summer came. The tree lost its flowers, but it had dark green, very attractive leaves. Then autumn came and the leaves faded. And then they took on the colour of amber. In the winter the tree was bare and shivered in the wind, and the sky beyond it seemed icy. But I had to leave Cressy before the tree began to bud again. I can return to Cressy only when I am old. But then that tree I knew would either not be there at all, or it would have grown into a thick, unfamiliar trunk. That's one thing . . .

"Now another. A certain man—one of my earliest, the sixth or seventh, his name was Marco—when he laid his hand on my knee it always gave me the utmost delight. For seven months we slept together, swam together, flew together. Whenever he touched me all my body experienced a thrill of bliss. After seven months the time came for me to change my address, and I flew from Budapest to Copenhagen, while a month later Marco had to fly to Chicago. As soon as I arrived in Denmark, in the first Eros Club I asked a certain man—his name was Ralph—to lay his hand on my knee. But I felt nothing. After that I tried again and again, always with a different man, and I keep on trying. No one has hands like those of Marco. But I don't suppose I shall ever meet him again. And even if I do meet him, we shall only separate once more.

"A third thing: there are some human voices which make me feel ill. There are other voices which hit me like a hammer, my head aches with them, though they are kind. And there is not one spot in all the Republic of the Globe where I could hang up a notice: entry permitted only to those voices I like.

"A fourth thing: I've had three children. Of course I've never seen them and I don't know what their sex was. But it's a strange thing—possibly it's due to my reading the classics, or possibly because even now sometimes at night I think my *mother* is looking at me—I would terribly like to know what sort of children I gave birth to. For instance, I see a child playing in the park,—yellow, black, or occasionally white—and I suddenly halt as though rooted to the spot. 'I may have given birth to you.' And I have a terrible longing to snatch up that child and flee and be with it in a place where Marco's hands are too, and the tree of Cressy, and . . . a silver spoon perhaps? And where there will not be any voice which I don't like. Do you understand? What do you make of all that? What ought I to do to ensure that I can have perfect wellbeing?"

Wanda was silent. A very aged smile lay over her smooth face: the smile of Eve, the first of all earthly refugees.

"What ought you to do?" she repeated. "Forget! Forget the tree at Cressy, forget Marco's hands, forget the unpleasant voices and forget that you have ever borne children. If you don't forget, nothing in the world will ever be able to give you greater wellbeing!"

Priscilla threw herself up discontentedly.

"But don't you think"—she pointed to the house on the farther side

of the ravine, standing flooded with moonlight, surrounded with trees"—
"that would be good for me?"

Wanda's hand grew heavy on Priscilla's arm.

"Oh, no! If you were to live there your life would cease to be reckoned in volitations. . . . It would begin to be reckoned in fertile and unfertile years. In happy and unhappy child/births. In infidelities and reconciliations. In hours of waiting,—too long; and in hours of happiness,—too short. In the course of the years your vernal tree would spread into a forest, one spoon would be multiplied into dozens of spoons, to the magic of Marco's hands would be added—good and evil—the magic of his heart, would be added the whole of Marco. Your children would begin to flee from you, some to death, others to indifference; clouds and enemy aeroplanes would hover over your roof . . . Ah!"

Wanda stood between Priscilla and the house. She was pale, tense.

"Don't do that" she clasped her hands. "Don't try to *live* in a house! If you begin to live there, fear and despair will come to live with you. At every hour of the day and night you will be afraid of losing something."

But Priscilla was not a nervous, pre-global girl. She had an inquisitive mind and a beloved profession: Textual Commentator. Never again might she be so near to a house as now. And never again might another hour of her earthly volitations be so silvery and so mysterious.

"Don't prevent me!" she pushed aside the pre-global woman. "I know you haven't told me all there is to be told about the house. You have talked only of fear and despair. You have said nothing about thanks. But I remember perfectly the following scene: Mrs. Dalloway is sitting on a sofa, she is surrounded with silver and all sorts of similar articles, which of course makes her servant Lucy very envious. Mrs. Dalloway's husband isn't there, because another woman has invited him to lunch. Her daughter isn't there, because her daughter loves another, an ugly Miss Killman, and not Mrs. Dalloway, her beautiful mother. And yet Mrs. Dalloway sits on the sofa and gives thanks. Nothing is happening around her, only furniture is there, and she sits and says to one knows not whom: 'Thank you, Thank you, oh, thank you' . . . So don't you fear, don't despair, and don't thank, if you no longer have the strength. But I want to know fear, to know despair. And I want to thank. Otherwise I shall never have perfect wellbeing."

The nightingale was still singing. Less melodiously than at the beginning of the evening, more imperiously, as though during those couple of moonlit hours its love had matured.

Priscilla stepped on to the embankment leading across the ravine to the house, and halted.

For a moment all was still. Then there was a scrunching of gravel. Wanda walked down to the embankment. She overtook Priscilla, and timidly touched her hand.

"I shall not prevent you," she said. "And I have one request. If you begin to live in that house, let me . . . let me arrange the flowers in the rooms."

(Translated by Stephen Garry).

Reviews

The Spanish Labyrinth

"THE SPANISH LABYRINTH" by GERALD BRENNAN.

Cambridge University Press, 21/-

Books about Spain have been written either by learned professors who write history ignoring completely working class movements and the existence of the class struggle and who therefore put fanciful interpretations on events they are unable to understand, or by journalists who feel qualified to write about Spain after spending only a few days or a few weeks in the country and without having acquired any previous knowledge of the historical background of the people. Such books sometimes contain brilliant passages, like Borkenau's *Spanish Cockpit* or George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, but are also full of inexactitudes and hasty generalisations. They are also often written with a bias to suit the political fashion of the moment. Several books were written about the Spanish revolution which did not mention the work of the Anarchist movement or even its existence. On the other hand, because it is popular to boost the Communists, most of the work done during the revolution was attributed to them.

The Spanish Labyrinth stands apart from all these books, both for the erudition which the author displays and for his objective approach to the subject. Gerald Brennan did not use any expedient method to write his book. He has taken great pains to find the truth and to be fair to all the parties he deals with, and if sometimes the book contains inaccuracies one feels that they are due to misinformation rather than to political prejudice.

Brenan's book is made interesting and penetrating by his sympathy for the subject he has treated. He loves Spain and the Spaniards and has a particular understanding of the Spanish peasants among whom he lived so long, not as a tourist but as one of them, sharing their houses, their food, their talk, their songs and dances. An historian should attempt to experience in imagination the feelings and reactions of the people he describes, and he is able to do this only if he can, so to speak, put himself in their place. Brennan is extremely gifted in that respect. He has dealt with his subject not only as a scholar but also as an artist and a psychologist. This has enabled him to understand actions which, not being a revolutionary himself, he cannot approve, such as the burning of churches, the throwing of bombs, the killing of priests, the expropriation of landlords and many other acts of revolt of the Spanish workers. He sees these facts in their right perspective and makes fun of the reactionaries who, at the slightest movement of revolt among the masses, are prepared to see the whole working class as a mob of criminals. He effectively debunks atrocity stories, a task which, unfortunately, historians are not often willing to undertake, particularly when these stories are used to discredit national or class enemies. Brennan says that already in 1873 the most infamous stories were circulated against the Anarchists. The Carlists, who were the equivalent of the Fascists of to-day, issued two pseudo-anarchist papers to give more weight to their atrocity stories. The front page of one of them, *Los Descamisados* (The Shirtless), bore the following battle cry:

"900,000 heads! Let us tear the vault of heaven as though it were a paper roof! Property is theft! Complete, utter social equality! Free Love!"

After the Asturian rising of October 1934 accusations of atrocities were again circulated on a big scale against the revolutionary workers. Brennan says:

"The most incredible tales were solemnly told and vouched for. The nuns at Oviedo were said to have been raped: the eyes of twenty children of the police at Trubia were said to have been put out: priests, monks and children had been burnt alive: whilst the priest of Sama de Lagreo was declared to have been murdered and his body hung on a hook with the notice "Pig's meat sold here" suspended over it. Although the most careful search by independent journalists and Radical deputies—members that is, of the party then in power—revealed no trace of any of these horrors, and

although the considerable sums raised for the twenty blinded children had to be devoted to other purposes because none of these children could be found, these and other stories continued to be repeated in the Right-wing press for months afterwards."

Of the terrorist methods used by the Anarchists at the end of the last century Brennan gives a very penetrating explanation particularly important as these acts are almost universally condemned and are still held against Anarchism:

"The nineties were everywhere the period of anarchist terrorism. We have seen how the loss of its working-class adherents and the stupidity of the police repression led to this. But there were other causes as well. The reign of the bourgeoisie was now at its height. Their meanness, their philistinism, their insufferable self-righteousness weighed upon everything. They had created a world that was both dull and ugly and they were so firmly established in it that it seemed hopeless even to dream of revolution. The desire to shake by some violent action the complacency of this huge, inert and stagnant mass of middle-class opinion became irresistible. Artists and writers shared this feeling. One must put such books as Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* and Huysman's *A Rebours*, Butler's and Wilde's epigrams and Nietzsche's savage outbursts in the same category as the bombs of the Anarchists. To shock, to infuriate, to register one's protest became the only thing that any decent or sensitive man could do."

One could make many more quotations to show that Brennan's attitude is not hampered by prejudices and that his judgments are not delivered according to a fixed code of bourgeois morality.

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The Spanish Labyrinth is divided into three parts. The first part describes the history of the *old régime*, that is to say the political régimes in Spain from 1874 to 1931. This part is mostly a chronicle of events.

The second part which, from a social point of view, is the most interesting, deals in detail with the *conditions of the working classes* and contains a careful analysis of: the agrarian question, the Anarchists, the Anarcho-syndicalists, the Carlists, the Socialists.

The third part deals with the events in Spain after 1931, after the fall of the monarchy and the institution of the Republic. It contains a chapter on the history of the Popular Front and a short sketch on the history of the Civil War from 1936-39.

It will be seen that the number of subjects treated justifies the subtitle of the book: "An account of the social and political background of the Civil War." All the forces which came to clash during the revolution are analysed here from their birth and the study of this book is indispensable if one is to understand properly the Civil War itself.

Parts of the *Spanish Labyrinth* are of particular interest to Anarchists and I should like to deal with them at length at the risk of giving them a prominence which they do not attain in the book itself.

The first point of interest to Anarchists is the relation between Anarchism and the communalist movement in Spain. Spain resembles Europe of the Middle Ages, when communes had a great deal of autonomy and when each member played an active role in the running of the communities. Unlike the communes in Mediaeval Germany, France and Italy, which flourished mostly in the towns and were composed of artisans and merchants, the communes in Spain existed mostly in the countryside and were composed of peasants, herdsmen, shepherds. There were also communes of fishermen on the coast. Provincial and municipal feeling was therefore very strong and every town was the centre of an intense social life. This autonomy of the towns and villages allowed the full development of the people's initiative and rendered them far more individualistic than other nations, though at the same time developing the instinct of mutual aid which has elsewhere been atrophied by the growth of the state.

It is difficult to understand Spain if one has not read *Mutual Aid*, and, indeed, some of the pages of the *Spanish Labyrinth* would form a valuable supplement to Kropotkin's work. Spanish communalist institutions would have offered Kropotkin a tremendous amount of material to illustrate his theory of *Mutual Aid*, but it is

probable that the material was not available to him at the time. Brenan's book has filled the gap to a great extent by giving examples of agricultural and fisherman's communities which have survived through centuries, independent of the central authority of the government. While communes in the rest of Europe were gradually absorbed by the state and had lost most of their liberties and privileges by the middle of the XIIIth century they survived much longer in Spain.

"There is of course nothing very remarkable about this communal system of cultivating the land. It was once general—in Russia (the *mir*), in Germany (the *flurzwang*), in England (the open-field system). What is, however, remarkable is that in Spain the village communities spontaneously developed on this basis an extensive system of municipal services, to the point of their sometimes reaching an advanced stage of communism . . . One may ask what there is in the Spanish character or in the economic circumstances of the country that has led to this surprising development. It is clear that the peculiar agrarian conditions of the Peninsula, the great isolation of the many villages and the delay in the growth of even an elementary capitalist system have all played their part. But they have not been the only factors at work. When one considers the number of guilds or confraternities that till recently owned land and worked it in common to provide old age and sickness insurance for their members: or such popular institutions as the Cort de la Seo at Valencia which regulated on a purely voluntary basis a complicated system of irrigation: or else the surprising development in recent years of productive co-operative societies in which peasants and fishermen acquired the instruments of their labour, the land they needed, the necessary installations and began to produce and sell in common: one has to recognise that the Spanish working-classes show a spontaneous talent for co-operation that exceeds anything that can be found to-day in other European countries."

When one takes into account the fertile growth of communistic institutions, the mutual aid displayed among peasants, fishermen and artisans, the spirit of independence in the towns and villages, it is not difficult to understand why anarchist ideas found such a propitious soil in Spain.

The theories of the Anarchists, and of Bakunin and Kropotkin in particular, are based on the belief that men are bound together by the instinct of mutual aid, that they can live happily and peacefully in a free society. Bakunin through his natural sympathy for the peasants, Kropotkin through his study of the life of animals, of the primitive societies and the Middle-Ages, had both reached the conclusion that men are able to live happily and show their social and creative abilities in a society free from any central and authoritarian government.

These anarchist theories correspond to the experiences of the Spanish people. Wherever they were free to organise themselves independently they had improved their lot, but when the central government of Madrid through the landlords, the petty bureaucrats, the police and the army, interfered with their lives, it always brought them oppression and poverty. The Socialist party with its distrust of the social instincts of men, with its belief in a central, all-wise authority, went against the age-long experience of the Spanish workers and peasants. It demanded from them the surrender of the liberties they had fought hard to preserve through centuries and for that reason never acquired the influence which the Anarchist Movement attained.

Another cause for the rapid and extensive growth of the Anarchist Movement in Spain was, according to Brenan, the intense religious feelings of the people, particularly the peasants.

This may at first seem paradoxical. The Anarchists in Spain, perhaps more than in any other country, bitterly attacked religion and the Church. They issued hundreds of books and pamphlets denouncing the fallacy of religion and the corruption of the Church; they even went as far as burning churches and killing priests.

Brenan does not ignore this, but he distinguishes between the Christian beliefs of the Spanish masses and their intense dislike of the Church, and one must admit that his interpretation of the relation between religion and Anarchism is very convincing.

He describes the Spaniards, and in particular the peasants, as a very religious people. By religion he does not mean, of course, belief in and submission to the Church but a faith in spiritual values, in the need for men to reform themselves, in the fraternity which should exist among all men.

At the beginning of the XIXth century a general decay of religious faith took place, but religion had meant so much to the poor that they were left with the hunger for something to replace it and this could only be one of the political doctrines, Anarchism or Socialism. Anarchism by its insistence on brotherhood between men, on the necessity for a moral regeneration of mankind, on the need for faith, came nearer to the Christian ideas of the Spanish peasant than the dry, soulless, materialistic theories of the Marxists. The Spanish peasants took literally the frequent allusions in the Scriptures to the wickedness of the rich; the Church of course could not admit this. The Spanish people in their turn could not forgive the Church for having abandoned the teachings of Christ nor could the Church forgive them for interpreting to the letter the teachings of the gospels. Brennan suggests that the anger of the Spanish Anarchists against the Church is the anger of an intensely religious people who feel that they have been deserted and deceived.

Brenan foresaw that his interpretation would give rise to many criticisms (from the Anarchists and even more from religious people), and he says:

"It may be thought that I have stressed too much the religious element because Spanish Anarchism is after all a political doctrine. But the aims of the Anarchists were always much wider and their teachings more personal than anything which can be included under the word politics. To individuals they offered a way of life: Anarchism had to be lived as well as worked for."

This a very important point. The Anarchists do not aim only at changing the government or the system; they aim also at changing the people's mode of thinking and living, which has been warped by years of oppression.

Whatever the cause of this attitude, whether religious or otherwise, it is important to stress it. Anarchists are always accused of having a negative creed, but critics overlook that Anarchism through its attempts to render men better even under the present system is in fact doing some positive and very useful work.

Brenan has seen this very clearly and he refuses to judge the Anarchists through their material achievements alone. He does not consider merely the number of strikes they have carried out, the rises in wages they have obtained or the part they have played in the administration of the country. Their role, he says, should be judged not in political terms but in moral ones, a fact which is almost universally ignored.

For example, the role of Anarchists in educating the Spanish masses is often overlooked. While the Socialists thought that education was a matter for the state to deal with, the Anarchists believed in starting work immediately. As early as the middle of the last century Anarchists formed small circles in towns and villages which started night schools where many learned to read.

At the beginning of this century Anarchist propaganda spread rapidly through the country-side and it was always accompanied with efforts to educate the masses. The Anarchist press not only published books by Kropotkin, Bakunin and Spanish Anarchist theoreticians but also books on science, geography and history. The Anarchist newspapers were avidly read. The Anarchist movement had several dailies, but more important perhaps was the great number of provincial papers. In a relatively small province like Andalusia by the end of 1918 more than 50 towns had libertarian newspapers of their own. The work of editing these newspapers must have provided the members of the movement with a good deal of education and experience. The work of F. Ferrer in setting up free schools, the first outside the control of the Church, is well known.

This education was not limited to book knowledge alone. Anarchists were expected to give a good example by their private lives. *Solidaridad Obrera*, the Anarchist daily, in an article published in 1922, says that the Anarchist should set out to have a moral ascendancy over others. He should obtain prestige in the eyes of the workers by his conduct in the street, in the workshop, in his home and during strikes.

They were equally anxious to bring honesty in the matter of sex. Brennan says; "Anarchists, it is true, believe in free love—everything, even love, must be free—but they do not believe in libertinage. So in Malaga they sent missions to the prostitutes. In Barcelona they cleaned up the cabarets and brothels with a thoroughness that the Spanish Church (which frowns on open vice, such as wearing a bathing dress without a skirt and sleeves, but shuts its eyes to 'safety valves') would never approve of."

The Anarchists tried to live up to their ideals within the movement itself. They had no paid bureaucracy like the other parties. In a country like Spain, where there is the greatest distrust for money and those who seek it, the attitude of the Anarchists brought them the sympathy of the masses. Brennan points out several times that the Anarchist leaders were never paid and that in 1918, when their trade union, the C.N.T., contained over a million members, it had only one paid secretary.

Brennan's book carries an encouraging message for the Anarchists. Though he himself considers Anarchism impracticable, he gives abundant proofs that it is deeply rooted in Spain. Unlike Fascism and Communism, it would not have to rely on foreign influences to come into being.

The practice of mutual aid which maintained itself in the village and town communes, the aspiration of the Spanish people towards liberty, justice and the brotherhood of all men, their love of independence which gave rise to federalist aspirations, all point to the conclusion that only an anarchist system of society will be possible in Spain.

Here I must say, however, a few words of disagreement with Brennan's conclusions. Though he admits that the arbiters of Spain's destiny must be the worker and the peasant, he believes that a government (of the real kind of course) must control Spain. He does not say where a good government can be found. He declares that a government in Spain should not depend on the church, the army or the landlords; as on the other hand he does not seem to believe in the dictatorship of the proletariat (which he rightly condemns in Russia) it is difficult to see why he rejects so firmly the Anarchist solution.

He also advocates strongly the collectivisation of the land, but seems to expect that a "sensible government" could carry it out, when history shows that no government in Spain was ever prepared to go against the interests of the landlords.

I think that Brennan has emphasised too much the agrarian nature of Anarchism. This is probably due to the fact that he lived in Andalusia, a completely agricultural region. Incidentally, he was criticised on this point by H. N. Brailsford who reviewed his book in the *New Statesman*, and who said:

"I witnessed their (the Anarchists') astonishing success during the civil war in running factories with high principles as their chief equipment, and I was deeply moved by the schools they established for the sorely tried children of Madrid."

Brennan also attaches, in my opinion, too much importance to the rivalry between Madrid and Barcelona. In his opinion all Castilians are authoritarians and all Catalans are independent and lovers of freedom. To maintain his thesis he makes certain errors of facts which it is not worth while to discuss here. He is again far from the truth when he attributes practically all the burning of churches to Anarchists; in fact the burning of churches occurred everywhere spontaneously, and took place sometimes in villages and towns where there were no Anarchists.

However, these are mostly details, and do not prevent the book from being a very serious contribution to the history of revolutionary movements. Brennan, who lived so long in Spain, seems to have been influenced by its communal institutions, and has written his book in the spirit of the craftsman of the Middle Ages. Like them he has produced his *chef-d'œuvre* which is the test of his love for his art and his respect for his fellow men for whom the book is written. *The Spanish Labyrinth* has been created with that painstaking and disinterested love which characterises all lasting works.

M. L. BERNERI.

The Personal Principle

"THE PERSONAL PRINCIPLE", by D. S. SAVAGE. *Routledge, 10s. 6d.*

At the present time in world history, when society appears to be reaching the final stages of devolution towards a totalitarian condition, many isolated men and groups of men are coming to question its collective manifestations. They do not belong to any organised movement or to a single function in life. They are not all writers or professional thinkers—many are factory workers, peasants or soldiers whose experience or innate good sense has made them see more clearly than their fellows into the nature of social reality. They do not all approach the problem from the same point of departure—in social activity they are represented by groups which derive their ideas and strength from the teachings of revolutionary anarchism, in philosophy by men like Nicholas Berdyaev, in literature by men like Ignazio Silone, in the more obscure walks of life by men who may never have studied anarchism or heard of Berdyaev or Silone but who realise passionately the need for a real personal freedom and also the impossibility of attaining such freedom in a society based on injustice and coercion and dominated by a hierarchy of privilege and power. From the thoughts and desires of these men there emerges the common image of a way of life, not built on the all powerful collective, but growing from the personally integrated individual who lives and works in free co-operation with his fellows. This changed attitude among individuals, this reorientation away from the totality and towards the individual, represents the only force which can create eventually a society where freedom, the inner freedom of the spirit even more than the outer freedom of the body, will be possible for all men, because every individual will have become responsible and fully integrated within.

In *The Personal Principle*, D. S. Savage develops a literary criticism which is based on this conception of the personality. His book is divided into two parts, each consisting of a number of more or less self-sufficient essays. In the first part Savage explains the standards of criticism and creation which he embodies in the 'personal principle'. In the second he applies these standards in the examination of the work of six of the most 'significant' of modern poets—W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Hart Crane, Harold Monroe, D. H. Lawrence and W. H. Auden.

Savage sees literature as "our endeavour to realize the essential nature of our experience of life and to present that realization to ourselves and others . . . From the writer's total response to life will arise his concrete artistic achievement, and out of that will emerge the implications as reflected in his thought and activity. Upon the degree of integrity and livingness of that response depends the character and structure of the concrete work of art, and the corresponding character of its implications in the realm of thought and activity."

Viewing the problem of literature as an historical one, intimately connected with the development of society itself, Savage shows how the growth of capitalism in the nineteenth century produced a condition in which the artist was no longer integrated with the society in which he lived. In the eighteenth century Johnson could maintain and express the values of his society and yet remain a conscientious artist. By the twentieth century social values had become so corrupt that no artist could embrace them without suffering a literal *disintegration*.

"We may assert with complete confidence that since that date all the genuinely significant writers are to be found within the influential radius of this minority of creative spirits who no longer share, or make any pretence of sharing, the values of society at large."

In such a society the artist becomes subversive.

"He can take nothing for granted. Of every one of his values this is true. He can no longer rely on any external authority—indeed, there is no external authority."

Savage's contentions on this issue are, of course, supported by the evidence of the moral and aesthetic deterioration of those artists who have conformed to contemporary social values and abandoned their subversive functions by the acceptance of state patronage, whether in Germany, Russia, England or America.

This situation of the artist is a temporary one arising from the conditions in modern society through which social values and those of the integrated individual are divided. It can only be solved, as, indeed, can that of men in general, by a social synthesis in which the supremacy of the individual is recognised, in which the anarchist ideal of a society functioning for the benefit of the individuals within it is realised, in which, to quote Savage, we shall see "the subordination of the exterior structure to the centrality of the individual human person."

This principle, as the anarchists have realised, is the touchstone of the true revolution. Savage makes the same point when he goes on to say:

"The 'classless' society, when it comes, will be valueless, and indeed, inimical to culture, unless it is humanly centrifed, unless it does in fact bring into general realization that relationship of person to person which is to be seen in the relationship of the modern writer to his audience, and which represents the replacement of 'society' by 'community'."

Because of this symbolic responsibility of the artist as a transmitter of individual values, Savage rightly attacks the ideas which have been put forward by many Left-wing writers that the artist should deliberately shape his art in order to serve the policy of a particular social movement. His remarks on this subject are worth quoting at length.

"Many socialists, nursing the vision of the classless society, are inclined to suggest to the writer that he should surrender his isolated position and 'get into touch with the working class' in order to produce a new literature which will express the 'desires and aspirations of the struggling masses of humanity', and so on and so forth. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that such doctrines are essentially vicious and anti-creative—that they are totalitarian in tendency. They are, moreover, based upon a class view of society, not a classless view. Their basic error is the assumption that in the life of the toiling masses the classless life of the future is realised now. Nothing, on reflection, could be more absurd. The toiling masses as such are entirely class-bound and require more than anything to be liberated from that bondage, to be made free members of a classless community. It is social change which is the issue, not artistic change. To suggest that the artist should adapt himself to the masses is to ask that he commit artistic suicide . . . To demand that art shall receive its values from society is to demand an impossibility. Values originate from within, they do not appear magically from without. In a society lacking all values, all standards, it is the function of the artist, of the original, creative human being, to discover, realize and manifest values and standards."

This passage seems to me to explain clearly how the artist—as an artist—can best work for a society based on individual values.

Savage's book discusses many other things than the relationship between the artist and society, but the argument outlined in this review contains its vital teaching. The studies of the various poets are interesting and valuable, but they are contingent upon the criteria emanating from the 'personal principle'. It is the exposition of this principle which makes the book so important a contribution to the comprehension of literature and its relationship to the world in which it functions.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.